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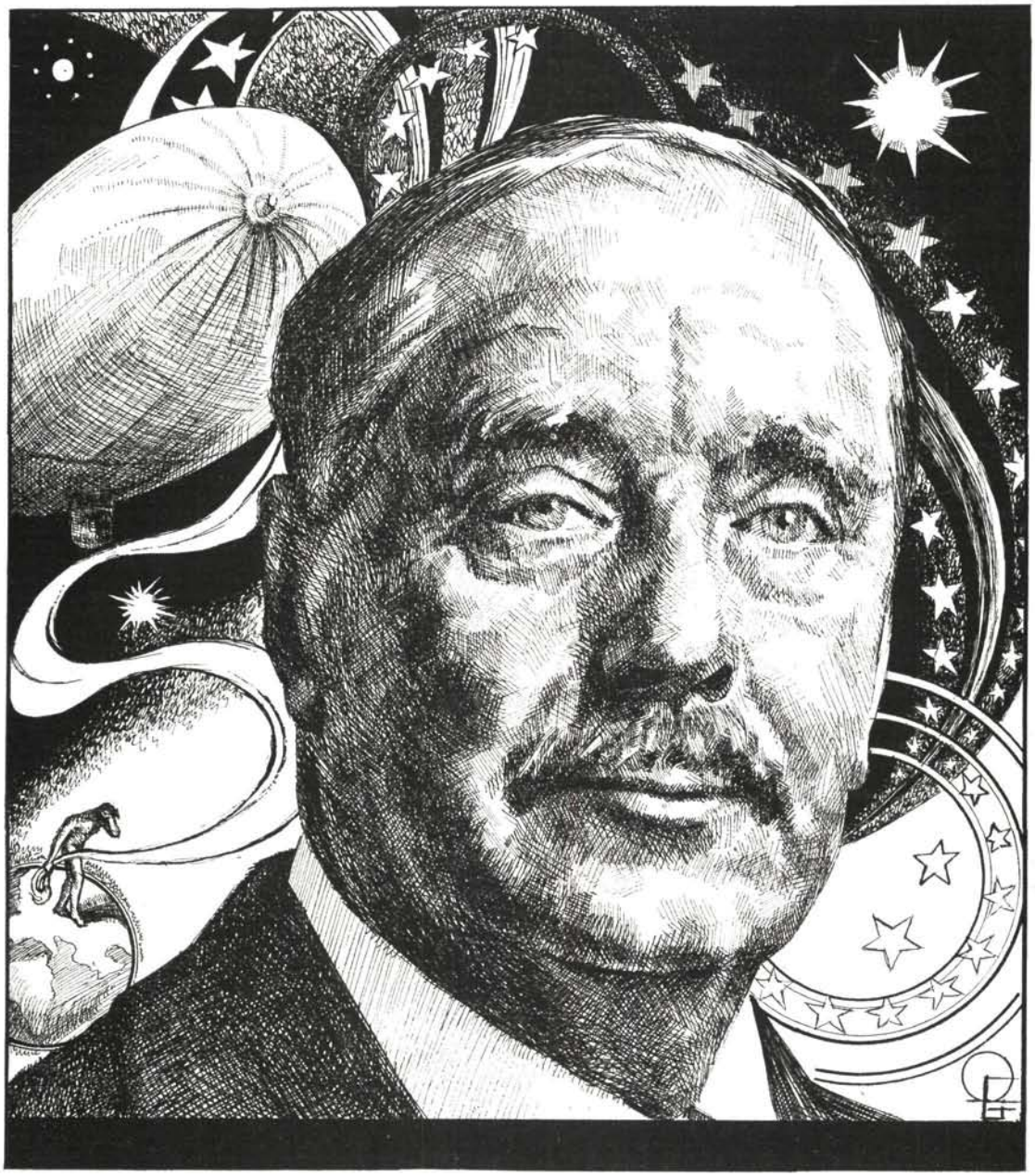

Herbert George Wells, 1866-1946

H. G. Wells Sees It Through

By Henry Seidel Canby, Elmer Davis, Clifton Fadiman, Waldemar Kaempffert

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The way of a farmer and his wife...

MEN who work the land, and the women who work for those men, have always commanded our deepest respect. They gave us a ray of hope only the other day. It was in an article about what husbands and wives find wrong with each other in this hyper-analyzed and ill-adjusted world. One conclusion of the survey was that farmers and their wives seemed relatively happier with each other than any other group.

That made us think of Paul Corey's book ACRES OF ANTAEUS which we are publishing on September 5th. Jim Buckly and his wife, for most of the book, are not happy, nor are they farmers. Jim wanted to be one after two years at the state agricultural college, but with a baby coming, Jim's plan necessarily changed.

He got a job with Mid-West Farms, Inc., and started with high hopes to treat the good Iowa soil as he knew it deserved. Emily's family, however, were of the ill-fated group that had owned the farms which the Mid-West goliath engulfed. Emily loved her home for the emotional things it meant; Jim loved the earth for what it gave to men. And in the debt-ridden days of mortgages, moratoriums, Huey Long and mock auction sales, Jim's ideas and Emily's failed to jibe. They had started with the highest hopes to be a farmer and his wife, but a thing called national economy came between them.

In the lives of these two people—each epitomizing one side of the struggle between individual and corporate farming—is the whole tragic story of depression days in our Middle West. Jim is the overseer, traveling from farm to farm, increasing production, forced against his will to plant "money crops", and forced into office politics. Only as Jim learns that human beings must be reckoned with, even as parts of an impersonal organization, does he regain that love for Emily which first inspired him.

Emily loses her interest in life when Mid-West snatches at her family's home. She throws herself feverishly into work with a brash organizer to forget Jim, Mid-West, and her still-born baby. Only as Emily learns that birth and growing and death cannot be denied, does she regain her love for Jim.

The novel goes full circle, more than Antaeus of Greek legend managed to do. You will remember that Antaeus, whose mother was the earth, got his strength in wrestling from contact with that earth. When Hercules discovered this, he lifted the giant into the air and vanquished him easily. In Paul Corey's fine book, through struggle and travail, through violence and hatred, Jim and Emily win back their contact with mother earth.

Farmers, even dogged and disheartened ones, have always seemed to be a group apart. Robert Frost expressed it in "Good fences make good neighbors." Old man Clausen expresses it in ACRES OF ANTAEUS when he has to pull up his own fence, the symbol of a whole lifetime of working with his own farm. All he says is "That's a damn good fence." Paul Corey knows all this; he is a farmer himself. ACRES OF ANTAEUS only serves to root deeper that respect for farmers which no Herculean effort can ever quite eradicate from the pavement-pounder's wandering mind.

ACRES OF ANTAEUS

A NOVEL ABOUT FARMS AND FARM EMPIRES

by Paul Corey

$2.75

AT ALL BOOKSTORES

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The Saturday Review of Literature

H. G. Wells Sees It Through

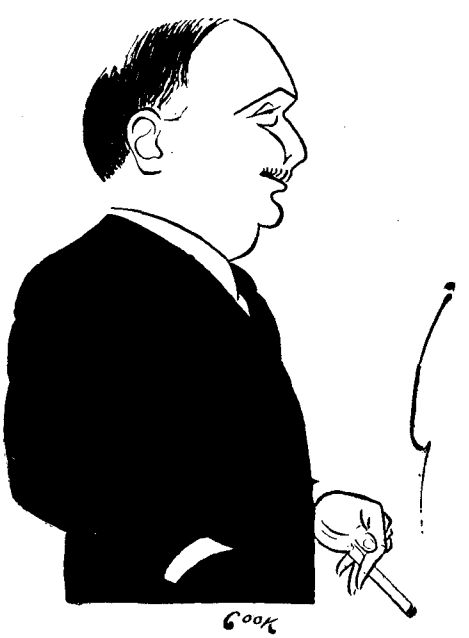
1. The Passing of a Prophet

By CLIFTON FADIMAN

THE death of Wells and the recent *SRL* Shaw dinner (for is not a testimonial dinner a kind of ritual-interment or play-funeral?) are small markers pointing to the end of the century of hope. Wells lived, and Shaw is still alive, to watch, in the race between education and catastrophe, catastrophe suddenly forging ahead, with every indication that it will breast the tape in a holocaust of triumph. Wells lived to see mankind taking its first somnambulistic but decisive steps—Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Bikini—toward the mass-suicide against which his fantastic romances had so often warned it. He spent his life exhorting us to become rational beings and ended it persuaded that we had become irrational self-murderers. His colossal literary output consists in notable part of Utopias; but his last published work, "Mind at the End of Its Tether," announces, quite literally, the imminent death of mankind.

A pupil of Huxley, a child of the nineteenth century, the century of hope, Wells inherited a belief in the evolutionary possibilities of man, a trust in the transforming power of science, a confidence in education, and a semi-religious faith in reason. Before he died he had observed a highly civilized people, the Germans, officially abjure reason in favor of the instincts of Neanderthal man. He had seen education in bondage, as in the Soviet Union, to an economic theory, or, as in the United States, diluted until it has lost most of its power to create mature men and women. He had watched science compelled to fashion machines that can and almost surely will destroy our civilization. He had caught the heart-chilling sound of the preparations being made for a gigantic backward stride in historical evolution—back toward a world tyranny or toward a new barbarian chaos. Is it any wonder then that his last utterances are unbalanced almost to the point, it would seem, of madness? Is it so surprising that the deathbed vision of this artificer of brave new worlds should be as dark as was that of the creator of the Yahoos?

We used to call Wells "prophetic." Prophecy, for most of us, seems a rather wild affair, the business of superheated brains, something to be at once feared and laughed at. Wells's prophecy, however, was not of the old, "inspired" type. He was no pythoness; he was a scientist. His prophecy was post-Industrial Revolution in its form, like that of Shaw or Einstein, and consisted at bottom of the simple exercise of the rational mind. In a period, such as our own, in which streamlined journalism and other forms of communication have virtually assassinated the normal human interest in general ideas, in a period when most minds are parochial or "practical," or both, the rational man stands out as an eccentric. Between his thinking and ours yawns a gulf. His proceeds from a sense of the whole, of the community of mankind, and is spurred on by a vision of the future. Ours proceeds from a sense of ourselves—or ourselves as part of our tribe or nation—and is stimulated by today's needs. Hence to us such men as Wells and Shaw, however much we may admire or reward them, are not really to be taken seriously as guides to the future. We read "Anticipations" or "The Shape of Things to Come" with quick interest, but it never occurs to us strongly to petition our kings and presidents and senates that they may plan our future in accordance with what such books say. We treat our prophets somewhat as monarchs indulged their court fools. No longer feeding them hemlock or nailing them to a cross (except in Germany), we accord them instead the status of favored pets.



From a contemporary caricature of H. G. Wells.

I do not say that Wells was a man of unfailing wisdom, but only that, as rated against most of us, he was a rational human being. In the course of his long life he said many careless, many foolish, many merely pettish things. His notions of an aristocracy, self-appointed to save the world, had a dangerous ring; and he never understood clearly that what he called "order" was not a good in itself but only the first brute requisite for the living of that truly human life that men have not yet tried. But when you have said all this, the fact stands that his major warnings have proved well-founded and that his central insights have been, or will shortly be, confirmed by our conduct.

He took time off from himself to measure his species with a round considering look and to argue from its present behavior its probable destiny. Six years before the first fighting plane gave active proof of man's ability not to conquer but to destroy his environment, Wells in "The War in the Air" told us plainly what mechanized warfare could and would do to the human race. In "The World Set Free," written in the medieval epoch before Hiroshima, Wells predicted the

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destruction in 1958 of the world's great cities. Today his estimate appears to err by a few years on the optimistic side. "The Time Machine" (1895) and "When the Sleeper Wakes" (1899) drew pictures of the world-tyranny that probably lies ahead of modern man, just as "The Shape of Things to Come" (1933) argued for the world government that can conceivably head it off.

It must be borne in mind that, except during the last few years of his life, all of Wells's prophecies, however catastrophic, were rooted in optimism. He believed that if men could be shown the truth they would forthwith set themselves free. Lacking, as he did, the tragic sense, the Shakespearean-Sophoclean feeling for the world, he overestimated both our ability to recognize the truth and our appetite for true freedom. What confidence he had in our desire to learn! How hard he worked with us, his students, writing all the textbooks himself ("The Science of Life," "The Outline of History"), exhorting, preaching, poring out tens of millions of words, seizing upon any formula which he thought might help us to understand that this was one world, that mankind must be either one—or undone.

IT has been said justly, that most of Wells dates. But it has not been adequately stressed that Wells himself knew that his life-work was bound to date, that, in a sense, he *intended* it to date. Once he had taught us to take what he said for granted, he was finished. His aim was to make us aware of our time—its perils and its promises. That accomplished, we were no longer very much aware of Wells himself. We lived by ingesting his ideas. Once ingested, they had fulfilled their function and become outmoded. They had helped to make us contemporary. In so far as they date, we do not.

Thus, Wells's view of his career was Shavian. He thought of himself not as an artist whose job was to express a special view of the world, but rather as the temporary dwelling-place of a force. This force he proposed to use up, as efficiently, as completely as possible, before being thrown on the scrapheap. He had no thought of himself as a great writer, much less an "immortal" one. "We are all things that make and pass," are, approximately, the last words of "Tono-Bungay," "striving upon a hidden mission, out to the open sea."

Among writers there are Formers and Reformers. The Formers create out of the world another one, their own. They do not, I believe, specifically influence conduct at all. I cannot believe that anyone has ever changed his behavior as a consequence of reading the plays of William Shakespeare. But the Reformers wish to change the world by persuading us to alter our thought and behavior. When they are imaginative, as was Wells, they create Utopias. These Utopias are not works of art but merely carrots set in front of the donkey's nose that he may walk the faster. Occasionally a Former and a Reformer meet in one man, and we have a Plato or a Shaw. In Wells the Reformer was dominant almost to the end.

WELLS lived on the future as some men do on the past. The future was the schoolmaster's rod with which he threatened us; it was the schoolmaster's pointer with which he showed us the way of reason. Frank Moore Colby once said of him: "He is annoyed by the senseless refusal of almost everybody to shape his life in such a manner as will redound to the advantage of the beings who will people the earth a hundred thousand years hence." This is true; and yet there is something to be said for Wells's future-mindedness. Perhaps, unless we can learn to think of ourselves as we might be a hundred thousand years hence, we shall destroy each other a hundred months hence. Perhaps only the Utopians can help us to survive. In any case it is clear that the "practical" men—the generals, the admirals, the politicians, the dictators, and the owners of the great mind-killing magazines—cannot. In the light of the Dark Century to come, Wells's Utopian thought begins to look less fantastic than it did when first we encountered it. He has been right about so many things. Perhaps he was right, too, in his conviction that we would not endure as civilized men unless we educated ourselves, at whatever the cost, into an awareness of our essential unity.

Wells's unhappy last years are a small measure of our inability or unwillingness so to educate ourselves. The master was disappointed in his pupils. We had learned so much from him—so much from "Tono-Bungay" and "Marriage" and "The New Machiavelli" and "Joan and Peter"—that he thought us capable of learning the final and great lesson contained in the concluding chapters of "The Outline of History." Perhaps, after a few more blundering, horrible, but not fatal wars, we might have learned the lesson after all, and Wells's spirit might have been at rest—but nuclear fission came to upset the time-table, to make it almost (though not quite) impossible for man to save himself. And so Wells died convinced that there was no hope, that he had fought in vain, written in vain, educated in vain, hectored in vain, raised up a

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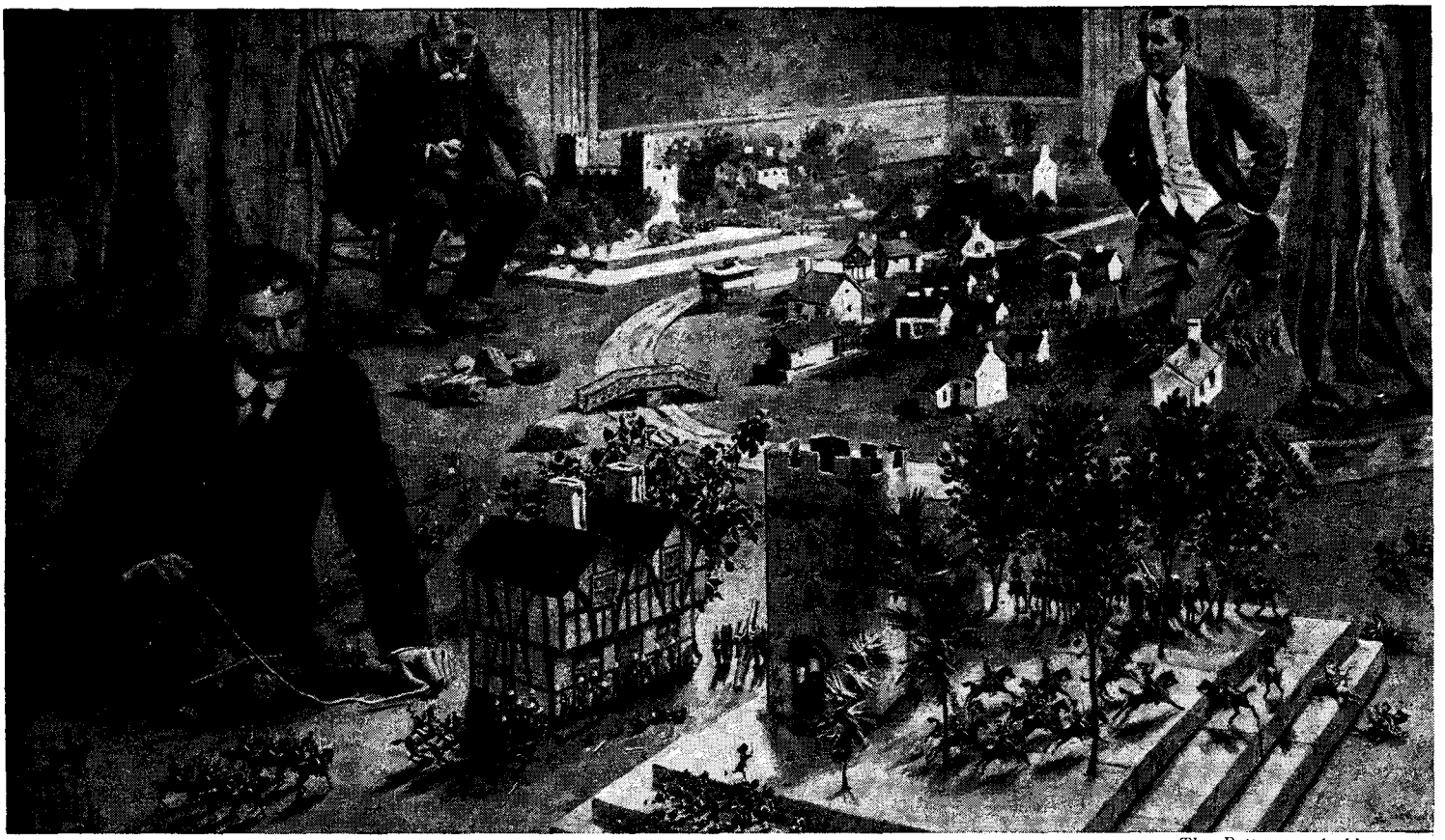

—*The Bettmann Archive*

A sketch from *The London Illustrated News* (1913) on the "Novelist-General playing soldier as the nations play it in deadlier fashion. Mr. Wells playing little wars on the floor, with leaden soldiers, cardboard and shrub country and guns firing wooden 'shells'."

Wellsian generation in vain. He had helped to make our time and it had turned and helped to defeat him.

By pursuing the path of the schoolmaster prophet-journalist, Wells, fully conscious of what he was doing, stifled the artist in himself. For that he was part artist there can be no doubt, however strongly the current of literary fashion may today be set against him. The odd thing is that the artist in Wells is as far removed as possible from Wells the world-citizen, Wells the world-planner, Wells the world-encyclopedist. The artist in him is the son of an unsuccessful shopkeeper and a lady's maid. He is the underbred but madly observant little boy who at nine began to read in the gentleman's library of the country house where his mother was housekeeper. He is the Dickensian romantic who understood by immediate sympathy the twisted, repressed poetry of the lower middle classes. He is the Wells who created, with a purity of intention that he was to recapture only a few times again in his career, Kipps and Mr. Polly and Uncle Ponderevo. This Wells, who crops out intermittently in a dozen other novels, is quite misprized today, but if there is ever a tomorrow, he will be resurrected, as Trollope has been, and enjoyed once more. This Wells, the creator of pure character, lay very deep in him, overlaid, overgrown, almost overcome by the prophet and the world-changer. But he is there nonetheless, not very large or imposing, to be sure, but durable.

I think, too, as many have pointed out, that the fantastic romances have something extraordinarily long-lived in them. For one thing, they are as well written as the books of Jules Verne are ill written: and style, in the end, tells. For another, they have the power to place us in an imaginative yet real relation to our epoch. Wells is the only considerable novelist of our day with a solid scientific background. His fantasies are so well-founded in concrete knowledge as to be educational as well as exciting. From them two generations have already received a vision of what science can do for us, for our advancement or our destruction. This vision is what all the gadget-magazines, all the popularizations, do not supply; and what they omit is precisely what is most important for us to learn.

Some of the short stories, too, such as "The Country of the Blind," have a classic ring to them; and, for all its faults, there are a sweep and energy and power of organization in "The Outline of History" that should attract readers for decades to come, if they are to come.

The rest? It will perish, as Wells wanted it to perish, having served its turn. Most of his books, like his autobiography, were experiments, intended to lead experimenter and reader to a conclusion. They were tools, instruments, means rather than ends. They were poured out in a rapid flood (Wells must have been as copious as Dickens or Balzac), a circumstance that does not ordinarily make for first-rate writing. The propaganda novels are formless. It is not that Wells had no sense of form (his best short stories are beautifully organized), but that he had no time for it. He wanted to get on, he was a man in a hurry. Almost everything he produced was written with a special urgency, as if around the corner of tomorrow lay either Utopia or the end of the world. Evolution was too slow for this evolutionist; he wanted to be the projector of intellectual X-rays that would produce sudden mutations in the mind of man, as ordinary X-rays can produce them in simple organisms.

His fiction is cored with mortality because it is representative rather than symbolic, because Wells could write fantasies but not myths, because only a mind of the order of Plato can reconcile the creative imagination and the lecture-room. As Virginia Woolf pointed out, the weakness of the Wells-Galsworthy novel lies in the circumstance that it is not complete, that, in order really to finish it, you have to set up a socialist commonwealth, or divorce your wife, or re-

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educate your children. Wells's interest in character often struggles through in spite of himself, but for the most part he uses his figures as mouthpieces for arguments. This does not necessarily make them inhuman, for an interest in argument and in general ideas was, up until a generation or so ago, part of the equipment of many human beings, indeed of that whole generation that we used to call Wellsian.

I suppose that generation is dead. It began to die at Munich and has been dying ever since. The Wellsian energy, the Wellsian hope, the Wellsian awareness of life's possibilities seem old-fashioned in a world of men whose thoughts are beginning to cluster more and more thickly around the single idea of physical survival. The nationalism that Wells attacked with such fury thirty years ago is fiercer today than it has ever been. The leaders, the great captains of industry and men of action in whom he placed his occasional trust, have, for the most part, proved frail reeds. The man-in-the-street—well, if you wish to grasp the depth of Wells's disillusionment with the average citizen of a great democracy, study the character of Edward Albert Tewler in "You Can't Be Too Careful," one of the very late novels. Tewler "is what civilization has made of him"; he is the passive, suggestible, mentally monocellular human being whose vast inane face is to be met with in all the Broadways and Main Streets of the world, the end-product of picture-magazines, bad education, mass entertainment, and a vulpine competitive society.

Perhaps, a few hundred years from now, a few men will painfully arise from the ruins of a cracked and seamed and fissured planet, and begin to rediscover, very slowly, the basic concepts of civilization. And perhaps one of them will unearth from the rubble of what was once a library a copy of "The Outline of History," or "The Shape of Things to Come," and read it, and wonder how his ancestors, with such books to warn them, could ever have made such a mess of things. And so the prophet will at last be not without honor.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 648)

E. A. HOOTEN:

APES, MAN, AND MORONS

Perhaps the most important human characteristic is dietetic versatility. . . . The ability to wrest from the habitat every possible aid to the maintenance of human existence is a great deal more useful than mere organic plasticity.

2. *Notes on the Failure of a Mission*

By ELMER DAVIS

I DID not know Wells and do not know what he was thinking about toward the end of his life, but he might very reasonably have been thinking that nothing fails like success. He grew up in a great age, the nineties, which it was once fashionable to laugh at but which now begins to look like the Lost Paradise; when the flood tide of nineteenth-century progress and optimism was still running, and when science was beginning to open up such possibilities as men had never dreamed of before. True, the human race did not seem entirely prepared to take advantage of its new opportunities; but that was because it was walled in by outworn orthodoxies. Wells, a poor unknown young schoolteacher, set himself to blast away these barriers to progress; with such success that when he died half a century later, so orthodox an institution as *The New York Times* editorial page could call him the greatest public teacher in the world.

So he was, and look at the world. Even in his youth it had tensions that he understood; twice he predicted their resolution in a world war. Well, since he wrote we have twice gone to Armageddon; twice the cause of right has triumphed and the devil has been bound in the bottomless pit; but we rise victorious over old perils only to find new perils, even more ominous, looming over the next hill. Wells the Socialist, living under a regime he despised, died in an England at last gone Socialist—but not because Socialism was the best way to control and distribute an unprecedented prosperity; only because Socialism seemed the desperate last resort to avoid complete collapse. As for Wells the reformer of private manners and morals, most of his revolutionary heterodoxies have become the commonplaces of everybody's mental and emotional background; yet it may be doubted if the human race is notably happier today than it was in the age of Grover Cleveland and Lord Rosebery and Sherlock Holmes.

—*Culver Service*

1890—aged twenty-three.

Were there Christian bishops in the latter half of the fourth century—midway between the jubilant anticipations of Lactantius and the painfully heroic reconstruction of Augustine—who uneasily contemplated just such a spectacle? Men who said to themselves, "Look, it has all come off; everything we hoped for has been realized; yet Apollyon still walks the earth"? I am not sufficiently read in the Church Fathers to know if anybody committed such thoughts to writing, but there must have been men who had them. It may be said that in those days the acceptance was official and superficial, that the essence of the new doctrines had not soaked into men's souls—and indeed has not even yet. Still, it could have been no more pleasant then than now to look at a world set free, and no better off. (On this point see Roark Bradford's "Kingdom Coming" — a book not of 1865 but of any age.)

What was the matter with this turn-of-the-century Reformation whose prophets were Shaw and Wells, that it came to so sorry a conclusion? A dozen years ago, in these pages, I examined that problem from the standpoint of the generation which in all English-speaking countries was educated chiefly by Shaw and Wells —the generation which was to be the pioneers of a new heaven and a new earth; and could find no better excuse for our ineffectiveness than that perhaps there were not enough of us. I can find none better now. That generation, in England—I knew them well —was perhaps the finest lot of young people any nation has ever produced at one time (unless France in the early years of Louis XVI, when also there was a Reformation afoot); but most of them are buried at Passchendaele or on the Somme. As for other nations, in possibly greater need of education, the Germans used to read

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Shaw but got the wrong things out of him (except for Spengler, and the Germans got the wrong things out of him too); while those who now rule Russia seem to have done most of their reading in the gloomy labyrinths of Marxian theology. (For that matter, the Congress of the United States might legislate a little more intelligently if more than a few of its members had been permeated by the Wellsian and Shavian doctrines.)

THERE were not enough of us sons of the prophets; but our prophets were pretty good, as prophets go. Both Shaw and Wells realized that the only obstacle to the realization of the Earthly Paradise was human nature; and if they somewhat underestimated its cussedness, there was less evidence to go on in their youth than we have now. "I who have preached and pamphleteered like any Encyclopedist have to confess that my methods are no use," wrote Shaw in the Preface to "Major Barbara," but that must have been a brief interlude of despondency; for he wrote that forty years ago and he has been preaching and pamphleteering ever since. At any rate, as between the two, Wells was the more inclined to keep his feet on the ground. Shaw thought that the best education was no education; but Wells, who had taught school and known pupils, knew better. (Much of "Joan and Peter" makes as much sense still as when it was written, though it might be noted that both Joan and Peter had to get their real education from experience.)

Wells had his visionary moments; in "The Shape of Things to Come" he seemed to hope that war might finally be ended by a revolt of aviators' consciences—something which has not yet happened, and would have to happen simultaneously and equally in all nations if it were not to leave us worse off than before; and in "The World Set Free" he cut completely loose from all plausibility and hoped that we might be saved by the sudden application of the collective intelligence of all humanity. (For commentary see the debates of the United Nations Committee on Atomic Energy, *passim.*) But he never indulged in any practical aspirations so fanciful as Shaw's dream of a Catholic Church catholic enough to include Protestants —an idea very attractive to everybody except genuine Catholics, and genuine Protestants; when Wells went off into fantasy he went all the way, imagining the human race transfigured by the swish of a comet's tail, loaded with a new gas conducive to brotherly love.

—*Culver Service*

1910—"The History of Mr. Polly."

Another difference—Wells was, to use a bit of bureaucratic jargon, much more of an operator than Shaw, at least in intellectual approach. Both men believed they were collectivists; but Shaw was much more so than Wells, though even Shaw had little use for collectivism when it interfered with the conscience of such a sensitive individual as Lavinia or Saint Joan. Wells's dominant desire always seems to have been to find some way to make things work, even if (sometimes it almost seemed preferably if) a strong individual had to do it. The theme adumbrated in "The New Machiavelli" was pronounced, and amplified with variations, in "The Outline of History"; history (or so it seems to memory—I have no books with me at the moment) was a succession of strong men, each one of whom was about to remake the world when he was deflected by an amorous young woman. Shaw wrote about Caesar and Cleopatra too, but not like that. Yet it is notable that when an ostensible collectivism turned in practise into the rule of a strong individual, Wells was rather less sympathetic with it than was Shaw. But then Shaw still seems to believe in the perfectibility of human nature, however skeptical he may have become in its early practical realization; and as Crane Brinton has reminded us, Reigns of Terror are also Reigns of Virtue.

Wells was more dubious about perfectibility; he never played with it much outside of "The World Set Free" and "In the Days of the Comet," and in the latter book he had to pass a miracle to make us perfect over night. Usually he was much more realistic; his very first book, "The Time Machine," was a horrible warning of what might happen to us if we are not careful. "The War in the Air," which must have been begun soon after

—*Wide World*

1940—in America.

Bleriot flew across the Channel and is the prototype of a hundred similar apocalypses, underestimated — as did its successors—the ability of the human race to take punishment, but not its persnicketiness; and imagined a war stubbornly fought out till every organized government in the world had been smashed as you can smash a saucer with a stick. And in "When the Sleeper Wakes"—one of his best pieces of writing, and sounder prophecy than some of its better known successors—he saw mankind rebelling successfully against a tyrannous oligarchy, only to fall under the worse tyranny of the politician who had led the revolt. I do not imagine that book is read much in Russia.

WELLS apparently never thought much of "When the Sleeper Wakes." Years later he revised it, not entirely for the better, and among other things removed the hint of a happy ending which perhaps a young novelist had put in to help the sale. As he originally wrote it the People, thanks to the hero's sacrifice of his life, were about to beat the Boss; in the revision Wells said in substance (again I write from memory) that he ought to have realized that the struggle between the Boss and the People is unending. I wonder if he still thought that, at the last, if he saw that the dialectic which Hegel perceived as in a mirror enigmatically is valid in a sense; that no matter what positions are gained or lost in successive phases of the struggle, Arimanes and Oromasdes will be locked in perpetual conflict till the end, whatever the end may be. (Our grandfathers would never have dreamed that Arimanes might finally win, but we cannot exclude that possibility.) How that prospect would seem to a man who grew up in the

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Age of Hope I cannot conjecture; for our more depressed generation, it is something to be able to feel that we have a chance.

If we have a chance, we owe it to the fact that Arimanes and Oramasdes are inside us, not outside, and that (with all respect to the Predestinarians) we may be able by intention to do something about it; if the chance is thin, we owe it to the fact that (with all respect to Socrates) virtue and knowledge are not necessarily the same thing. *Meliora dum video, proboque, deteriora sequor,* said a man who had undoubtedly studied Socrates and perceived that there was something Socrates had left out; and he has had plenty of successors. But if the chance, though thin, is by no means hopeless, we owe some gratitude to Shaw and Wells.

They cleared away a lot of cobwebs; if they replaced them, occasionally, by obfuscations of their own, the very training they had given us helped us to see where they had gone off the track. If the battles they won were episodes in an interminable campaign, they at least enable us to fight on somewhat more favorable terrain hereafter. What they both gave us is the conviction that if the human race is ever going to amount to anything, it has got to work out its own salvation; that whether or not God helps those who help themselves, He certainly does not help those who don't; and that if Arimanes in his secular fight with Oromasdes should finally get the upper hand, we shall have nobody but ourselves to blame for it. A bleak prospect? Well, it is the prospect there is; whether we like it or not, we had better learn to live with it.

3. *Evangelist of Utopia*

By WALDEMAR KAEMPFFERT

IT was during the second half of the nineteenth century that the western democracies felt the full impact of science and technology. The factory and the railway were changing the landscape, fast liners were carrying emigrants from Europe to the Far East and the Americas, streets were lit by gas, Edison's electric lamp had already been exhibited and installed, a few automobiles were so noisily clattering through the streets of Vienna and Paris that their drivers were arrested for disorderly conduct, gas-filled airships had made short timorous journeys, Langley had flown a quarter-sized unmanned steam-driven airplane. What next? It was a period of romantic wondering, of gasping in amazement at what the scientists and inventors were doing.

Jules Verne and H. G. Wells made the most of this romantic mood. The Frenchman was the more "practical" in the sense that he took the railways, steamships, helicopters, airplanes, electric lights, and other inventions which were described in such popular scientific periodicals as *La Nature* and *Cosmos* and made them the basis of thrillers. The Englishman was more imaginative. Both were the spiritual descendants of Poe. Verne had to shoot his voyagers to the moon from a colossal cannon in a projectile furnished like a villa on the Riviera, and when they arrived he could do no more than describe the topography of the dead moon and pack his book with Facts that Every Boy Should Know. But Wells? He created "cavorite," a substance with anti-gravitational properties, peopled the moon with underground selenites who had an advanced society of their own, and saw to it that the marooned and doomed surviving terrestrial visitor radioed back to the earth an account of his adventures. The difference is typical. Even then, Wells, still a floundering journalist, writing on anything that would make a saleable article, was something of a sociologist. To that period belongs the series of *Fortnightly Review* essays which he entitled "Anticipations" and in which he set forth in a new and arresting way the social change that science and technology were bringing about.

Verne wrote thrillers mechanically to the end of his life. Wells dropped them because he had a social mission to perform. In later years he remarked that they had been eclipsed by what the press and the popular books on science were reporting on the achievements of biologists and physicists. Verne thought highly of his "Voyages Extraordinaires" and was bitterly disappointed that the French Academy failed to elect him. Probably Wells was mistaken in repudiating his performances in the same field. Boys are bound to be enthralled by "The Time Machine," "The First Men on the Moon," "The Island of Dr. Moreau," "The War of the Worlds," and similar exercises of Wells's for a few decades to come.

Verne was almost devoid of social sense, partly because he was just an educated boulevardier and a minor dramatist who struck a rich vein of ore from which he was determined to extract every ounce of value, partly because of his conservative French upbringing. Wells came of a downtrodden family, his father a professional cricketer and unsuccessful shopkeeper, his mother a *çi-devant* lady's maid. A sense of social injustice was instilled early. Besides there was something called Progress that permeated the Victorian atmosphere, and Progress meant scientific progress. At the feet of Thomas Huxley this ambitious, imaginative youngster caught a vision of science that was never dimmed. He took his degree as a bachelor of science and taught science at a miserable salary until Fleet Street opened its doors. If he was not a professional scientist he was at least a lucid interpreter, and as such he made science bone of his bone.

The idea of Progress in the modern scientific sense did not originate with Wells. It begins with the Renaissance, when formal experimental science turned men from the contemplation of heaven to the study and evaluation of experience. Hence the proliferation of post-Renaissance utopias, beginning with Sir Thomas More's. The end is not yet, because the Renaissance is still with us. Wells is momentarily the end of a line of utopians and by far the most vigorous, stimulating, dramatic, caustic, and appealing.

As the evangelist of utopia and the apostle of social change brought about by science, Wells preached the application of the scientific method to government. What would be the character of social change under science? Could it be controlled and directed as an engineer controls the process of making steel? Convinced that the questions could be answered affirmatively, he cast about for a formula. The Fabians, of whom he was one for years, thought only in terms of their own brand of socialism and of economics. He was alive to the incompatability of current parliamentary methods of democratic government and the potentialities of science. The

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world was manifestly being standardized by new means of transportation and communication, by mass produced goods, by technological practices which were the common property of civilized countries, by a common scientific method which had made chemistry and medicine the same in every advanced community. Science was clearly molding this culture. If its onward sweep was not to be checked, and if it was not to be thwarted in its effort to feed, clothe, house mankind rationally, to cure disease and prolong life in every class, to make the fruits of the laboratory the possession of all, then vested interests, monarchies, patriotism, and nationalism would have to go by the board. So at the outset Wells shouted that only a scientifically planned world state would meet the requirements of society. He predicted disaster if his principles were not accepted. There were only two alternatives. The one was to find "a new way of living for our species," the other was "violence, mystery, destruction, death and the extinction of mankind." Like all evangelists he overlooked the tremendous strength of folkways, religious faith, feudal loyalty to established institutions. The Wellsian steamroller was to flatten out all these. Because he belonged to the non-military class and had a contempt for patriotism, it left him cold when battleships fired salutes or troops marched through the Marble Arch on their return from some minor war in a colonial jungle. There was no catch in his throat when the colors were ceremoniously raised or lowered.

What is the formula for social happiness? Wells put it succinctly in this passage from "The New World Order":

> (*a*) Outright world socialism, scientifically planned, plus (*b*) a sustained insistence upon the law, law based on a fuller, more jealously conceived restatement of the personal Rights of Man, plus (*c*) the completest freedom of speech, criticism, and publication, and sedulous expansion of the educational organization to the ever-growing demands of the new order.

No wonder that when he interviewed them in Moscow, Stalin and Trotsky concluded that Wells was an incurable bourgeois. Wells agreed. He declared over and over again that he was a cockney and insisted on his "unlimited right to think, criticize, and suggest" and to proclaim himself a socialist in his antagonism "to personal, racial, and national monopolization."

It has been the fashion among literary critics and French, English, and American socialists in the last twenty years to dismiss Wells as an

—*Wide World*

1943

outmoded, renegade Fabian, and so they buried him while he was still alive. Probably his predictions have more vitality than the undertakers imagine. My reason for thinking so is the fate of the more famous utopias. Plato's "Republic," Sir Thomas More's classic "Utopia," Campanella's "Città del Sole," Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis," Andreae's "Christianopolis," Edward Bellamy's "Looking Backward" were not utterly futile performances. They are still read, quoted, and studied. All are based on the supposition that if war, poverty, insecurity, and misery are abolished mankind will be content to lead a life of monotony. Wells made no such mistake. As the apostle of Progress he dismissed stagnation. Besides, science and technology were ever changing and opening new regions for exploration. Change was the keynote of his utopia, change under scientific control, change which was given social purpose and direction. That doctrine of change is now generally accepted in latterday political and social teaching, and because it is accepted Wells was far more in later life than a living corpse wandering about in an imaginary social paradise.

He was accused of vagueness. But if ever a utopian supplied specifications it was he. In fact the subtitle of "The Open Conspiracy" reads "Blue Prints for a World Revolution." The highly successful Karl Marx, who was also killed off a generation ago but who proved to be only in a state of suspended animation, gave his disciples not precise instructions but a system of philosophy soaked in Hegelian obscurantism. By comparison Wells is as definite as an engineer who has to design a block-signal system for a railway. Moreover he had a keener realization than Marx of the need of education. His more or less peaceful world revolution could never be fomented unless the public mind were prepared for it. It was for this purely educational purpose that he wrote his "Outline of History" (of which more than 3,000,000 copies have been sold), his "Science of Life" (about the best general popular textbook on biology extant) and his "Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind." That trilogy alone is likely to preach his gospel for many a year to come, and on its strength he must be regarded as the foremost public teacher of his time.

There is another and more compelling reason for thinking that Wells has more sap in him than his critics imagine. And that reason is the mental explosion caused by the atomic bomb and the new vistas opened by the rational control of atomic energy in peace. New issues have been raised which must be faced squarely if the disaster that Wells predicted is to be averted. So we find the physicists advocating a world state and sounding his note of doom if it is not established. What they are saying was said long ago much more dramatically, much more convincingly in "The World Set Free" and in "The Shape of Things to Come." Our society is torn between communism, which is very much alive, and a fascism which did not die with Hitler and Mussolini. It is a society which is desperately trying to adapt a machineless eighteenth century liberalism to a scientific twentieth century's exigencies. It need not swallow the whole formula set down in "The Open Conspiracy" and in other Wellsian forecasts, but it needs guidance, a new approach to social problems, which cannot be solved by the political methods of the past. Because of the bomb alone Wells is worth rereading, as the prophet of world democracy scientifically planned.

Ibis

By Elizabeth J. Buchtenkirk

LIKE a Chinese print,
Like new snow drifted,
Stood the white ibis
Against oleanders,
One slim foot lifted.

Incredible bird
With tall neck stretched,
Across the green
With elegant step,
Forever etched

Upon the eye.
Yet what I heard
When he took flight,
Was not the leaf,
Was not the bird.

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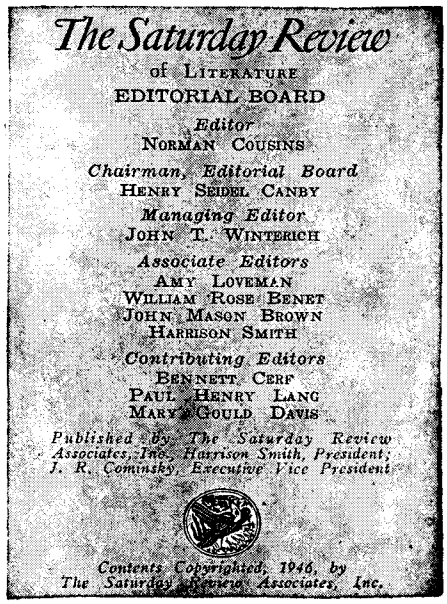

4. The Superjournalist

ENGLAND had to wait two hundred years for true successors to the great literary journalists of the early 1700's—such men as Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. These writers, who had the gifts of major men of letters, devoted their talents not so much to art and posterity as to the shaping of the knowledge and ideas of what Dr. Johnson called the "common reader" of their times. And when these successors came, the most influential was, like Defoe, a man of obscure birth with a genius for describing the essential, and, like Swift, filled with a burning resentment against the unreason of "the captains and the kings" of his age. But the education of H. G. Wells was peculiar to his own generation, peculiar, indeed, among his contemporary journalists. He was trained in the theory and the practice of research science, which had triumphed at last in a struggle which had been carried on since the Greeks. Research science had created a magnificent technology capable of subduing, if not conquering, nature, and had penetrated into the secrets of the control of human nature itself.

A reporter merely reports, but Wells was a superjournalist, who from early years made it his business to act as liaison between this new knowledge and these new powers and the lagging masses unaware of their potential good fortunes. He became the fiercest critic of the petrifications and prejudices of what he called intellectual and moral pretentiousness, and stupid, selfish obscurantism. This is what he determined to see through to the end, as Mr. Britling in his famous novel determined to see through in our first great war. If he died when the fog was seemingly at its thickest, and lightnings in it, that was not his fault. And if he was an imperfect prophet, he was the most prophetic man of his time, and failed for honest reasons, only one of which was chargeable to his own deficiencies.

I first met H. G. Wells in London in 1918, where my somewhat cloistered mind was scandalized, then fascinated, by his brilliant and ruthless attacks upon the conduct of the war and the preparations for peace. He had a clear vision then of One World, and what it implied, something quite different from Woodrow Wilson's League of Nations, and he knew who and what would be its enemies. A man of dignity, he was nevertheless still the London cockney in accent and appearance; yet his high, squeaky voice commanded attention because of what he said. Many times afterwards I took part with him in tumultuous literary meetings, and I never knew him to fail in dominating his audience except once, in Spain, when he addressed an international group in a French so cockneyized that only the few Americans and English present could understand him.

Now that he is dead and already begins to be seen in perspective against his times, I can at least guess the secret of his power. Wells's great period was in the decades before and just after the First World War. It was in "First and Last Things" (1908) that he made his "confession of faith." It was in those years that he wrote his scientific romances, including "The War in the Air" (1908), forecasting what only now begins to be tragically realized. It was then that his important social novels, such as "Ann Veronica" (1909), were published, novels that were really tracts preparing for a new social order that might ride the industrial revolution into peace and prosperity instead of war and dissolution. While Bernard Shaw, a far more brilliant writer, was in these same years serving as demolition man, undermining and exploding stiffened codes and decayed institutions, Wells was still the nineteenth century optimist, a realistic Tennyson of the common people, with a scientific education and science as his god.

The point is that he was as constructive as Shaw was destructive, and as sure as the great eighteenth century philosophers that if reason could be made to prevail, all would be well. But he was a realist, utterly divorced by his education from the "God's in His heaven—All's right with the world" school of nineteenth century optimists. And he was more courageous than the Matthew Arnolds and the Brownings, since no affection for old culture or the existing society

Design for Death

By Evelyn Ames

So great was the heat from the bomb that fell on Hiroshima that the "shadow" of a passing man shows clearly on the black pavement, and vines lived just long enough to leave their silhouette on seared walls.—News item.

I

EVER since the hour when in his cave
An unknown artist first immortalized
His vision, love has worked to cheat the grave
And to preserve the images it prized.
But he who vanished in this flash of doom
And like a figure on a Grecian vase
Remained aglow against the clay's dark bloom,—
His outline captured by the potter's glaze,—
Found a new art: his strange distinction was
With his own life to ornament his tomb:
Artist and model of his final breath,
He traced himself the instant of his death.

II

Of the vine, nothing is left. Nothing at all
Except a pattern on a blackened wall:
Testimony of how each flower turned
To sun that was not a sun, and as it burned
Shielded the stone from the consuming blast,
Leaving the future an imprint of the past,
Reminding man that his Promethean power
Can still be tempered by a single flower.

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kept him from carrying his reconstructions through church, monarchy, wealth, power, education, and current morality to the end of the road his arguments travelled. This was possible for him because science did, and still does, offer solutions to at least two thirds of the problems which have harried civilization since the Egyptians. But not to the other third.

It was Wells's scientific fantasies and his social novels which gave him his first great reputation. Even now he is best known as the prophet of the shape of things to come, by which most of those who praise him mean his forecasts of scientific advance in warfare. Yet disastrously important as the impact of these military gadgets upon human life has proved, his ultimate fame should not rest upon his deductions for applied science from principles already established in his youth. This would be like remembering Leonardo da Vinci because of his sketches of pre-airplanes.

It must be remembered that Wells's confession of faith was in a new society emerging from the industrial revolution which could, and he believed would, create a new way of life in a new world. His scientific romances and his social novels dealt by inference with the diseases and disasters sure to occur in an age that had the power to escape and did not use it. His central purpose is well illustrated in a book which certainly will not live, but had immense influence, "The Outline of History" (1920). And I may say parenthetically that I do not believe that any of his books will survive as literature, except perhaps one or two of his scientific fantasies. And furthermore, that I have heard him say more than once that he did not expect or want any of his books to endure, but wrote them to be absorbed into his own time and exert their usefulness there. They are journalism, not literature, written in the assimilable style of the journalist, and without the final and perfect statement of the great artist which insures an at least relative immortality in print.

I WAS present at the christening, if not at the birth, of "The Outline of History." It was at a dinner of "opinion makers" in London in 1918, where I was the American guest and for the most part a humble listener. We were talking of Anglo-American relations when Wells, with seeming improvisation, lifted the conversation from war to history. There was no adequate history, he said, and therefore no real understanding, of the development of English-speaking countries. No history had ever been written of what was obviously a society differentiated in many respects from the rest of the world, no matter how nationally divided. He described at length such a history, to be primarily Anglo-American, then ended despondently, the labor would be enormous, and who would pay for it? I asked him whether he knew of the American high-school system and the fabulous circulations of books that could be adapted as texts for use there and in the colleges. He did not, or at least said that he did not, but his eyes brightened and he questioned me closely. It was this project of an Anglo-American history that broadened into the world history of 1920, as he wrote me after its publication and its popular success.

WHAT was in his mind was not a great, definitive history. He was incapable by temperament and training of such a work, and must have known it. What he saw was a world that had been interdependent in some measure ever since civilization began, and was now being drawn together with frightening acceleration, and not only by speedy transportation but by needs and aspirations become common in societies from the barbarous to the cultivated everywhere. The wage rate in South Africa might be the cause of economic disaster in Peru, or the civil rights enjoyed by Americans be responsible for a revolution in China. And to most, if not all, of this interdependence the professional historians were blind, or silent. There were in 1920 no textbooks explaining the relations of the Arabic and the Roman empires, no histories where the American Revolution was a movement and a moment in world change. He did the job, a tremendous one, no matter how crude and ill-balanced the result. He got to work as soon as his cockney shrewdness saw that it could be paid for, and his practical good sense was convinced that it could be distributed to the millions who needed it, and thus would make a precedent for historians better trained, if narrower in scope, than himself.

But one great force Wells played down in his history, and omitted, or even attacked, in his tracts on the times. It might be called religion. It might be more truly called love. I do not mean physical love, made indispensable to the uses of fully developed men and women. He was vividly aware of that. I mean the love of fellow beings such as one finds in the Christian ethics. Love which springs from deep emotion and carries emotion with it, and more nearly resembles what the Transcendentalists called friendship and the Quakers, a concern for the welfare of others, than passion and its accompaniments.

If we are to regard Wells as a practical philosopher—and in spite of his journalistic methods we surely must—then this is his weakness, and accounts for his failure to stir as much as he enlightened his millions of readers. Science was not as all-powerful as he thought. Reason unaided could never be as successful as he (and Voltaire) thought in conflict with unreason. There was something bare, cold, and a little vulgar in the Utopia he described or implied as a result of the triumph of a scientifically organized life. Yet neither mystics nor fanatics can take much comfort from his failure to persuade the modern world to turn aside from the road to self-destruction. His reason remains good reason. His facts have already proved themselves to be sound. His vision is in many respects the broadest and most penetrating of our times. And if it is incomplete, most of what he wished for will have to be a part of any society reorganized in an interdependent and industrialized world. But it lacks warmth. It lacks what Emerson meant by soul. And so did the man. If he is a prophet, he belongs with Aristotle, not with Plato or Christ.

H. S. C.

High Pasture

By Ben Ray Redman

I WALKED through a field of sacred cows,
Whose cuds were long since chewed, whose brows
Were godlike in their fixity, whose eyes
Stared adamant against surprise.
I chose my stones and threw them hard,
But no cow stirred and no cow barred
My unseen passage through the herd:
While to the end my most heretical feet
Remained quite neat,
For sacred cows do not excrete.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Not to Eat, Not for Love"

SIR: (1) The correct title of the George Weller novel referred to in Harrison Smith's review of "We Happy Few" (*SRL* July 20) is, you've no doubt been told, "Not to Eat, Not for Love."

(2) The odd title is from Emerson: "After much wandering and seeing many things, four snakes gliding up and down a hollow for no purpose that I could see—not to eat, not for love, but only gliding. . . ." (April 11, 1834.)

(3) Long out of print, this excellent novel is at present available in a limited reprint at Harvard Book Store, Boylston St., Cambridge, Mass. (No, I don't work there.)

EDWARD M. ROLLINS.

Cambridge, Mass.

The Dean Boys

SIR: Pleased as I was at finding you on the side of the angels in your editorial of August 3 on the affair of Jerome Herman (variant reading: Jay Hanna) Dean vs. the schoolmarms, I cannot forbear straightening you out on some of the details of the great man's career. Despite Dizzy's annual predictions, the brothers Dean never attained the goal of fifty victories in a session for the Cardinals. Their best combined year was 1934 when Diz won 30 and Paul won 19, a grand total of 49. You also erred, I believe, in your assertion that Dizzy's crucial injury took place when he slid into a base. According to my recollection, the hideous deed was performed by Earl Averill, whose line drive broke Dizzy's big toe in the All-Star Game of 1937. But however it occurred, there is no disputing that Jerome Herman Dean — like Sherlock Holmes after his wrestling match with Professor Moriarty at Reichenbach Falls—was never quite the same man again.

LUKE WHITE, JR.

Librarian,
Plainfield (N. J.) Public Library

"Here Lies—"

SIR: "Exit Burbage" is unexcelled for terseness and wit, and the epitaph that Jefferson chose for his tomb is a model for simple beauty; but I wonder if there is any epitaph in the world as impressive as that of Sir Isaac Newton, in Westminster Abbey:

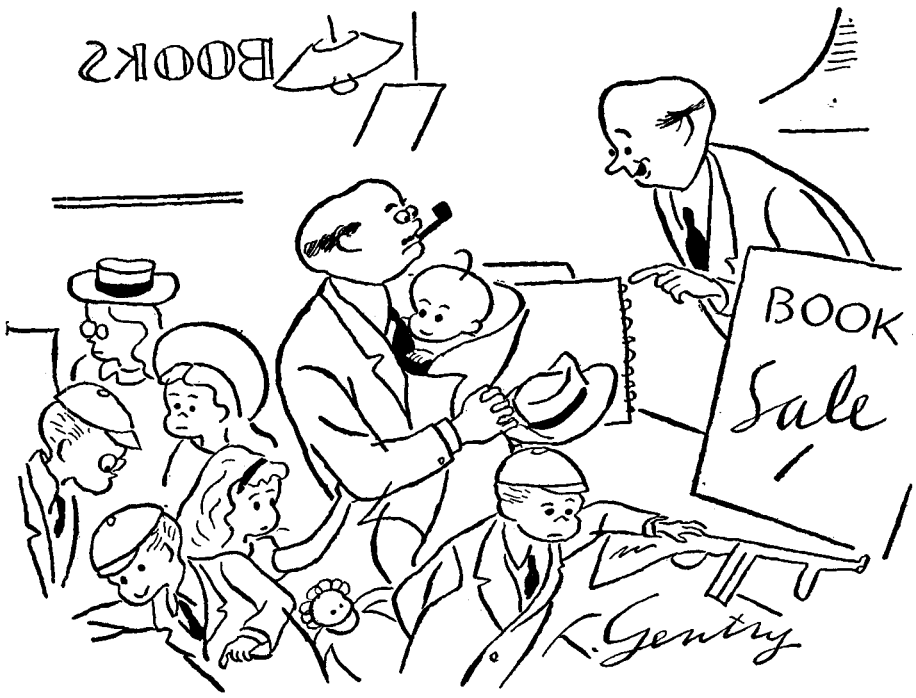
Here lies
Sir Isaac Newton Knight
Who, by vigour of mind almost supernatural
First demonstrated
The motions and Figures of the planets
The paths of the comets and the rides of the ocean.
He diligently investigated
The different refrangibilities of the Rays of Light
And the properties of the Colours to which they give rise.
An Assiduous, Sagacious, and Faithful interpreter
Of Nature, Antiquity, and the Holy Scriptures,
He asserted in his Philosophy the Majesty of God
And exhibited in his conduct the simplicity of the Gospel.

It comes to mind because Great Britain now is formally celebrating the tercentenary of Newton (the actual tercentenary year was 1942, when Britain was too preoccupied with demonstrations of the law of gravity to celebrate its expounder).

How dull and uninspiring are modern necroscripts. Who has written one worth remembering?

CLARK KINNAIRD.

New York, N. Y.



"Something escapist, I presume?"

The House of Beamish

SIR: In response to queries as to why I had ignored references to Jabberwock in letters to *SRL* June 15 issue:

O woe that Lewis Carroll wrote
(And those who've read him made a note!):
"Come to my arms, my beamish boy!"
Not knowing in his gleeish joy
He'd marked a family reticent
And made life tough where 'er it went.

No matter where I stand or sit
Some Jabberwock, completely lit,
Staggers toward me all aflame
As soon is heard the Beamish name.
"Come to my arms, my beamish boy!"
He yells, and like a flimsy toy
I'm whirled or tossed or set to spin
Around him fat, or 'round him thin.

I've tussled on the public street;
I've tangled with unsteady feet;
I've had my head crushed to a shirt
That reeked of liquor, sweat, and dirt.

Ah, me! I'd take another name
But then life would not be the same.
I'd have no pain from quoting bores;
I'd never have to watch for doors
To fly through when those Jabberwockers
Wanted to play like bobby sockers.
And then since I don't drink, you see
I'd miss the fumes sprayed over me.

Nevertheless, if Carroll had
Hit on the name of some other lad
To dejabberwock his wonderland
I think it would have been just grand!

MAUDE BEAMISH.

Harrisburg, Pa.

No More Reviewords

SIR: Your contributors' many comments on "reviewords" have led me to compose an "Irenicon"—which, I hope, will be more acceptable than most peace proposals:

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL

Who cares if the words used are many or few words,
Second-hand words or bright, shiny new words,
Technical words or even reviewords,
As long as the words which are written are true words?

For you call a horse one word when pettin' him,
A different word when you get on him,
And a scabrous and scurrilous metonym
When he loses the shirt which you've bet on him.

So why should we care how reviewers express it?
If they truthfully mean a book is a mess, it
Is better to say so than let the folks guess it.
A scarecrow's a scarecrow however you dress it.

JOSEPH L. BLAU.

Far Rockaway, N. Y.

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You and I and the Rest of Us

MAN: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By George R. Stewart. New York: Random House. 1946. 310 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by EDWIN GRANT BURROWS

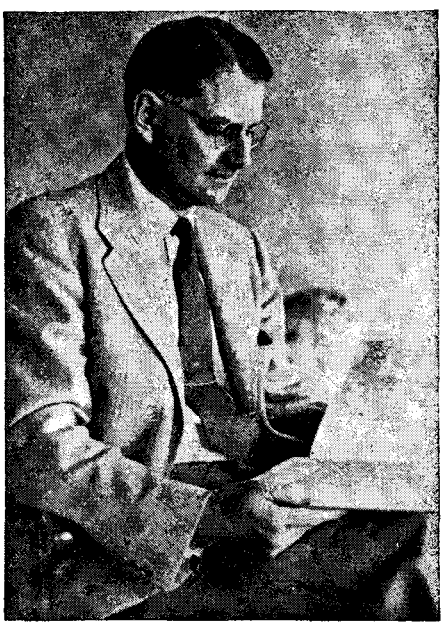
GEORGE R. STEWART has made a specialty of writing books the like of which were never before seen. He has found themes nobody has thought of undertaking—one novel about a cloudburst, another about a university examination, and so on. If the theme was no novelty, he saw to it that the treatment was.

This time he plunges into the theme of themes, the whole career of humanity. That of course has been tried before; by Van Loon in "The Story of Mankind," by Wells in "The Outline of History." This book does not get to the dawn of history in the strict sense—that is, the beginning of written records—until page 184 out of a total of barely over 300 pages. A good case can be made out for thus emphasizing prehistory, but that is not where the novelty comes in. Prehistory has been written before for general circulation. There have even been prehistorical novels, like Vardis Fisher's "Of Darkness and the Deep" and "The Golden Room."

The innovation this time is to cast the book in the form of an autobiography. The hero, who speaks in the first person, is Man. At times this autobiography of an abstraction is disconcerting. When it comes to inferring what may have happened, or what "I think" happened, "I" is no longer Man but George R. Stewart, piecing out the story from what little evidence remains. As every psychoanalyst knows, each of us has forgotten a lot about his own past, and the forgotten bits may be just the ones that account for our peculiarities. So at these points Stewart could call himself Man's psychoanalyst. Another difficulty is harder to get around. When Man begins talking about "my individuals," our hero stands revealed as fissionable, and the whole thing threatens to blow up. There is a way out, though. Once the reader gets the hang of handling the personification of man loosely, as the author does, the book reads well.

The scheme has some more serious disadvantages. It virtually forces the course of human development into a single channel, as if all mankind had to pass through the same stages, though some might go faster than others. Actually, of course, different peoples have developed not only at different rates but in different directions.

Again, Man divides the changes he is recollecting into three classes: those that have increased his control over the outside world, those that affect relationships among individuals, and those that affect the individual himself. The treatment of the first is by far the most circumstantial and satisfactory. For social change, there is a credible account of progressively larger groups, from band to village and so to city. But there is next to nothing about changes in such groups as the family, which nevertheless



George R. Stewart accomplishes "an amazing feat of condensation . . . by concentrating on what was done and ignoring who did it."

have always been important. Past change in such intangible relationships is nowhere on record, and a chronological account does not illuminate this side of human behavior as well as a survey of the range of behavior observable among human beings now.

When it comes to changes in the individual, about all Man has to say for himself is this: "In the close surroundings of the individual, also, have come changes which affect him so intimately that he almost thinks himself changed—in family relationships, in child-training, in attitudes toward sex." Now the work of some of Man's individuals—say Bateson and Mead in "Balinese Character" and DuBois in "The People of Alor"—has put it virtually beyond doubt that different ways of bringing up children do produce different adult personalities. But that has been done by comparing different peoples of our time, not by trying to trace change through the past.

However, there is plenty of good material left for three hundred pages. In fact, the book as it stands is an amazing feat of condensation. It was accomplished, first, by concentrating on what was done and ignoring who did it. Second, by holding to one theme and discarding everything irrelevant.

As an account of the inventions by which I, Man, have learned to get along in the world as well as I do, the book is admirable. The sketch of "my ancestors," usual at the beginning of an autobiography, outlines the process of becoming human in hand and foot and brain. The inventions begin with the "five essentials": tools, speech, fire, cookery, and clothing. To be sure, some might regard cookery as simply one of the uses of fire, though a very handy one for a creature somewhat weak in the jaws. Clothing, too, may seem less essential than tools, fire, and speech. Professor Stewart's colleague at the University of California, Professor Robert H. Lowie, has surveyed the three main uses of clothing—protection, modesty, adornment. He finds that the greatest of these is adornment. But then, one of the pleasures of reading a book like this, for anyone who has previously spent time on the subject, is to carry on a running quarrel with the author about categories and details. "Man" is a lively opponent in such an argument, and will give any of his individuals a good workout.

Man thinks two periods of his career were outstanding for helpful inventions. The first he calls the period of villages. Archeologists call it the neolithic; but the inventions that made it illustrious did not have to do with honing and polishing stone tools, but with domesticating plants and animals. They enabled man to produce his own food, instead of foraging about for what grew wild, or hunting (though mighty inventions are involved there) for meat that bred itself. The second great period, he finds, began about 1,000 A.D. and is still going on.

At the end Man tries his hand at prophecy. He does a very good job of it; first, because he does not take himself too seriously as a prophet, and second, because he foresees the very outcomes that this reviewer considers likely and desirable. It is a heartening prophecy. Man does not think his individuals will die out, at least not soon. Nor does he think his civilization will perish. He does think he will develop a single world government, and that in short order—"within a century or two." He thinks the species will be further united by a blend of the present races, or most of them. He refuses to judge whether his career has been good or bad, but says, "At least it is a good story." And so say all of us.

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Fifty-Eight Years of the Navy

HISTORY OF THE MODERN AMERICAN NAVY. By Donald W. Mitchell. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. 1946. 477 *pp.* $4.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT G. ALBION

FOR a picture of the general background of our Navy since 1883, this book is the most useful yet available; but unfortunately too many minor errors or questionable statements shake one's faith in it as a reference work. It is a pity that the tremendous amount of intelligent effort which went into this study should be marred by this carelessness. A brief period of overhaul should, however, produce a second edition which would be dependable.

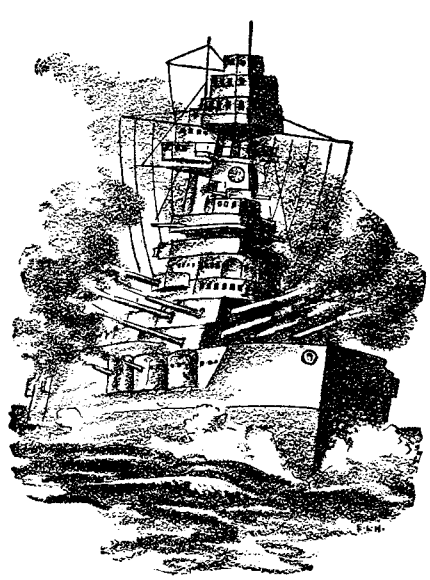
Here, between two covers, it is possible for the first time to get a comprehensive summary of a considerable part of the vital background of the modern Navy. Various aspects of these underlying considerations have already been analyzed, of course, by Mahan, Paullin, Puleston, Elting Morison, Brodie, the Sprouts, Davis, and others, but it has been necessary to read them all to get the full picture. Most of the previous general accounts, moreover, concentrating pretty much upon the shooting, which makes for good reading and serves to inspire midshipmen, have neglected the background story. Mitchell's work is based upon published official and unofficial material and adds little in the way of new interpretations, but he nevertheless makes a very real contribution by providing a setting for the fuller approach of the more specialized and original works. His language is not technical, and the style is clear if not inspired. The whole study is thoroughly documented, and the portraits and ship pictures have been judiciously selected.

The author declares in his preface that by the age of twelve he "could have given from memory the tonnage, speed, and armament of every major warship in the world." That early enthusiasm has resulted in ten tables which give such data on all our principal ships of the "New Navy" from the *Atlanta* to the *Missouri*. Those lists could have been rendered still more useful by including the date of commissioning as well as the date of authorization; the intervening time lag was often significant.

That growth of our fleet, in its qualitative and quantitative aspects, is really the backbone of this story. The technical, political, and international considerations which produced the results are satisfactorily analyzed. The operations of our ships in the Spanish American War, in World War I, and in various minor encounters are adequately told, though the accounts do not, by any means, shake Fletcher Pratt's primacy as a narrator of naval combat. The contributions of some of the outstanding civilian and naval reformers, in the face of chronic conservatism, are reasonably well evaluated.

It is useful to have here concise accounts of three phases of the Navy's story not before easily available: the period between the two World Wars, the Navy as an adjunct to diplomacy, and naval participation in polar explorations. The diplomatic chapters, which emphasize in particular the "Big Stick" in the Caribbean and the situation in the Far East, at times becomes too much of a general account of troubled international situations with the Navy's part therein rather obscure. The author might have clarified matters by explaining the changes wrought by the cable and by wireless in the concentration of authority. The rival cruiser captains at Samoa in 1889, for example, were really "on their own"; improved communications had not yet made them "damned errand boys at the end of a wire." In the ten pages devoted to the Arctic and Antarctic, while the data is interesting and will probably be new to many readers, the naval element in some of the exploration is pretty well diluted, compared to the earlier Wilkes expedition long before 1883 which is not mentioned; and the space might well have been used otherwise to better advantage.

Naval designers, in planning a 10,000 or a 35,000 ton ship, are faced with the eternal compromise between speed, armor, and guns; if two extra knots are wanted, one or both of the other elements must be reduced. Likewise an author, allotted 130,000 or 175,000 words, must continually decide what to include at the expense of something else. Deliberately or otherwise, Mitchell has given scant attention to certain factors which others might have deemed deserving of fuller treatment. The relations of Congress to naval policy, so well handled by the Sprouts, receive occasional brief mention but no full or adequate analysis. The long administrative struggle between the civilians and the naval officers for "sovereignty," particularly in the perennial efforts toward a general staff arrangement, is neglected. Some of the space allotted to Daniels's attempted social reforms might have been transferred to this aspect, so well treated in the Morison biography of Sims. Finally, while the author tells fully the evils of the old "promotion by senility," there is nothing more than a slurring reference to the efforts to overcome it by selection.



The volume loses some of its earlier objectivity in the final chapters; one is not surprised to find in the bibliography that in 1940 the author contributed to *The New Republic* an article entitled "What's Wrong with the Navy." The post-Pearl Harbor performance of the Navy demonstrated that, whatever the shortcomings of the old system might be, brilliant leaders were found with a minimum of trial and error. The eighteen pages, nine of text and nine of appendix, about the excessive profits in private shipyards make one wonder if the author's article in the *Nation* in 1939 on this subject is the reason for such disproportionate attention.

Allocation of emphasis, however, whether in planning a battleship or a book, is a question of opinion; sloppy workmanship is another matter. A little extra effort by the author or an outside critic might well have eliminated the dozens of mistakes or doubtful statements which are obvious even at first reading. A few examples will suffice. With the starting date of the book, the act which initiated the "New Navy" in 1883, the date that one finds in the text is "March 3, 1893." The *Reuben James*, sunk in 1941 near Iceland, is confused with the *Jacob Jones* lost in Word War I. Queenstown is in southern rather than in Western Ireland. Mahan spent three years instead of two at Annapolis; Franklin Roosevelt was Assistant Secretary for less than the eight years attributed to him. There never was an "Assistant Secretary for Aviation," whatever may be said for the caption under Dewey's picture, "deservedly considered America's greatest naval hero."

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Agrarians of All Trades

CITIES ARE ABNORMAL. Edited by Elmer T. Peterson. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 1946. 263 *pp.* $3.

THIS COUNTRY LIFE. By Samuel R. Ogden. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co. 1946. 166 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by RUSSELL LORD

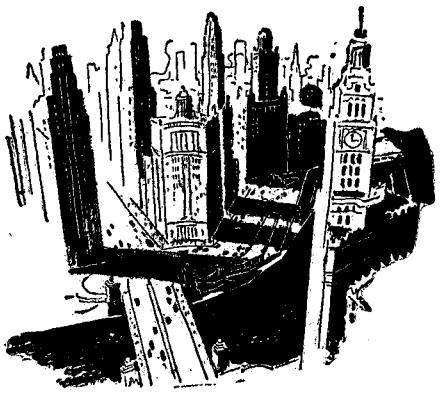
STARTING as a nation with some 90 per cent of our people farming, we have almost reversed that; fewer than 15 per cent of us farm full time for a living now. But rural roots still tug within us, especially in times of doubt and trouble, and we still have all kinds of agrarians in the United States.

Our farmer agrarians operating in the Populist tradition still "want in," as Ohioans say, on the swag and amenities—blessed word!—of the dominant urban order. More urbane writers of the Southern Agrarian group, or of the Northern strain led most audibly by Ralph Borsodi, want out. But when it comes to deciding just what part of urban comforts and divertissements may well be sacrificed for the sake of fresh air, birdsong, and a relatively pastoral freedom, "decentralists," as they call themselves, split into as many sects as Christians.

This argument has been going on for a long time. Farming agrarians, too, have had to consider the thwart to the spirit imposed by an increasing commercial interdependence. Quite naturally, farmers tend to undervalue space and fresh air, which they have in plenty, and perhaps to overvalue what they have not—adequate incomes, schools, hospitals, housing, and a general respect for their calling. City agrarians certainly overromanticize rural independence and freedom. And yet, when you examine with reasonable care the contentious pronouncements of both rural and urban agrarians, it begins to appear that, being Americans, they want everything.

Possibly because they are mostly Midwesterners, who tend toward middle ground instinctively, the twelve jack-of-all-trades agrarians who contribute to Elmer Peterson's anthology in dispraise of urbanism sidestep extreme rural romanticism to a man. "Decentralization," Mr. Peterson remarks as editor, "is no blueprint for a future Utopia. It means the development of smaller communities in the vast intervals between the great cities of the United States." This involves in some part, of course, the industrialization of rural landscapes, but the intrusion of industry need not be ugly. "Build the smokestacks and the grainstacks in sight of each other," Isaac Phillips Roberts, Cornell's first dean of agriculture, advised his Iowa neighbors when he was a settler there.

Nowadays, with dynamos replacing smokestacks, with better planning and planting, and with cars making possible a dispersal of workers' cottages and holdings throughout the countryside, many new rural factory sites are no less attractive than small colleges or normal schools, and the people who



work in these factories can have most of the urban conveniences along with country space, air, and garden stuff.

Writers have always enjoyed a certain mobility as to decentralization. It is as easy to write amid fields as in town—or no harder. It is natural, then, that of the twelve here assembled in "Cities Are Abnormal," four are primarily writers, and five others combine writing with teaching. The others are an architect and teacher, a physician, a retired business official, and a sociologist.

Louis Bromfield, who has set in his autobiographical "Pleasant Valley" a shining mark for all to shoot at, speaks here with a Jeffersonian ardor in favor of everyone living with at least "one foot on the land." Or two feet on it, part time, maybe; for he himself farms well and spaciously (not simply fooling at it), and writes well and spaciously, and makes good money at both. But Bromfield is three or four men rolled into one. Other contributors to this anti-urban symposium who, I happen to know, do no more than two men's work daily are doing all right out in the country, or at the edge of it, too. Ladd Haystead of *Fortune* has as many gadgets in his farmstead as you'll find at the Ritz. Paul B. Sears divides his time between teaching botany at tree-shaded Oberlin College and managing a farm that returns a profit. Sears's essay on the relative newness of what we call "civilization" to the age of earth—the ratio is about 200,000 years to 1—lays a sound ecological keel and framework for the thesis that cities are abnormal.

To a chapter on population trends, his specialty, Warren S. Thompson adds afterthoughts on atomic attack. All the defensive dodges now proposed for decentralization—string-towns, S-shaped deployment of edifices, etc.,—are inadequate. Only a world government that will prevent atomic bombing will preserve civilization at this juncture. Decentralization will not save us unless we become civilized.

Biologically, cities are doomed, anyway, Dr. Jonathan Forman says in one of this book's most impressive chapters. No sizable American city is reproducing itself genetically; and from the standpoint of health and vigor, both physical and moral, the huddled, hectic way of living had become indefensible, untenable, deadly, even before the advent of the bomb. Decentralization of well-to-do Americans, Henry L. Kamphoefner points out, has long been a commonplace; and the job of planners now is "to so order our society that these advantages will be sensible for all economic and social levels."

Samuel R. Ogden's "This Country Life" is the book of a man who has little time for national planners, having made a working escape into Arcadia, or something fairly like it, himself. "The bureaucrat's idea," he says, "is somehow to transplant the cheap distractions of the city to the countryside, and thereby make country living bearable. . . . For the past fifteen years I have lived in the country and have made a living there, though not by farming." Go forth almost without money, as he and his wife did, and you probably can't afford a car, but you may gain in other values. Farm? Yes, you can farm a small acreage if you want to make your living the hardest way; but there have always been other ways to make a living out in the country. Metal work is Mr. Ogden's favorite way of doing it; but he and his wife have also taken paying guests, run summer camps and a ski lodge; and they have lived a good life among good neighbors there in Vermont.

Samuel Ogden writes in a way that brings out hard facts, yet evokes all that is beyond price in country living. Decentralization, to him, is not a plan on a drafting board but a process widely under way. "Small plants," such as his own, are increasing. Many are successful. Salesmen, physicians, lawyers, contractors, electricians, mechanics, teachers, foresters, and soil conservationists, as well as artists and writers, are making a living out on the land.

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The Seventh Art

THE ART OF THE MOTION PICTURE. By Jean Benoit-Levy. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1946. 256 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by BUDD SCHULBERG

JEAN BENOIT-LEVY, Director of Films and Visual Information for for the UN, is in love with motion pictures and in this book he tells us why.

"Movement," he says, "is the primary language of things," and although he himself has mastered the most subtle, adult form of feature-length dramatic entertainment film ("La Maternelle," "Pasteur," "Ballerina"), he is equally proud of the geographical instructional film, "The Mountain," made exclusively for elementary and junior high school students. Here at last, if children cannot go to the mountain, the mountain truly comes to them. Instead of the text-book-dry description of ranges, rock formations and rainfall erosion with which all of us of the pre-educational-film era have been methodically bored, here are the mountains themselves towering majestically above us in the class room; instead of having to memorize that Mt. Abstract is 11,859 ft., its height is dramatized for us by the cap of ice and the mantle of snow that grace its peak; we see the snow melt into mountain water that swells into a torrent that plunges magnificently down the mountain-side, causing erosion or destruction, or perhaps to be channeled into an electro-power plant.

This is the exciting world which Benoit-Levy opens up to us in a book which is inspirational rather than technical. Not Van Johnson bringing corn-ball glamor and bubble-gum sex to an audience of bobby-soxers whom Hollywood has encouraged and cultivated if not created—but "films of life . . . (which) will light up the world with ideas of justice, freedom, and brotherhood" is his conception of the mission of "the seventh art." According to this concept, "the principal aim of all motion pictures is to educate." But unfortunately, during the primitive "flicker" phase of film production, this art fell into the hands of promoters and profiteers who regarded it "primarily as a freak show for rubbernecks," an approach which has left its greedy hand on almost half a century of movie progress. "Film producers," says Benoit-Levy, "lost all sense of their artistic and social responsibility toward an art whose great aim, as in fact that of all arts, was to elevate the thoughts of men, to delight them in the knowledge of things and of the world."

Often overlooked in our criticism of the formula-ized, assembly-line production of the big companies which dominate the world market are the creative pathfinders like Benoit-Levy and Painleve of France, Joris Ivens of Holland, Hans Burger of Czechoslovakia, Dziga-Vertov of Russia, Grierson, Cavalcanti, Rotha and Legg who have put British and Canadian documentary films so prominently on the cinematic map, and the American pioneers Robert Flaherty, Pare Lorentz, Herbert Kline, who have gone on to clear their own ground beyond the commercial frontiers, as well as such directors of entertainment films as Renoir, Capra, Ford, Wyler, Milestone and others who succeed in contributing, from time to time, works of genuine artistic merit.

If I have made it appear as if Benoit-Levy is interested only in films of social and moral uplift, I do an injustice to his catholicity of taste, which by a curious irony is exactly the opposite of the point of view represented by the Legion of Decency and that watchdog of national morality, Joseph Breen. For while Benoit-Levy can pay tribute to the "complete success . . . of the American films of the fanciful, spectacular or comic genre" which rest the mind, delight the eye and "reveal a technical and artistic perfection that is unequaled," he has profound appreciation for such works as Steinbeck's, Kline's and Hackenschmid's "The Forgotten Village," a work of "sincerity, artistic quality . . . (and) noble purpose," which belongs with the films of the Flaherty school that "have for their theme the life of man himself." The outstanding sequence in that picture, the primitive and painful method of childbirth experienced by a typical Mexican Indian girl, photographed with dignity, sympathy, and a deep sense of humanity, was sensational only in the true meaning of that sadly shopworn word. But it was a serious breach of the Motion Picture Production Code's Section II, Article 8, which reads: "Scenes of actual childbirth, in fact or in silhouette, are never to be presented."

My one quarrel with Mr. Benoit-Levy's valuable book is his somewhat superficial treatment of the strict censorship, political as well as moral, which has deprived Hollywood films of so much of their potential vitality and significance. By ascribing this censorship to morality leagues and well-intentioned ladies, the author fails to come honestly to grips with a delicate but decisive problem, the way in which the powerful Legion of Decency has been able to impose its religious and social taboos on the commercial motion picture. Threatened with a decrease in profits and the opposition of a tremendously influential group unless they submitted to the Legion's restrictive code, Hollywood producers have accepted a form of censorship as rigid in its own way as that which Gobbels exerted over nazi films.

But this is a minor flaw in the work of a great film artist who, in this challenging and stimulating book, preaches his faith in the great mission of the motion picture to which he has given a lifetime of distinguished practice.

—From the book.

Jean Benoit-Levy "has mastered the most subtle, adult form of feature-length dramatic entertainment" in his film "Ballerina," a scene from which appears above.

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Through Rose-Colored Glasses

THE FUTURE IN PERSPECTIVE. By Sigmund Neumann. Drawings by Derso. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1946. 406 *pp.* $4.

Reviewed by WAVERLEY ROOT

WE learn from history that we learn nothing from history." Surely no time has demonstrated more clearly than our own the truth of this cynical theorem. The events of today look like those of 1919 seen through a magnifying glass. On this larger scale, everything that happened then is being reproduced now, including the blunders. It seems that the soldiers and politicians of 1946 have never read the memoirs of the soldiers and politicians of 1919. If they have, they have not understood them.

Yet Sigmund Neumann has not lost faith in the power of the printed word. His object appears to be to set down the events of the recent past, from the birth of World War I to the end of World War II, in order that their meaning may be discerned and be used as a guide for the future. His work, as his publisher describes it on the jacket, is meant to be "an intelligent synthesis of contemporary history." A work of synthesis, if it is only that and nothing more, occupies a lower level than a creative work; but it is a most useful level. The art of synthesis should not be underestimated.

Unfortunately, Professor Neumann does not quite achieve the complete synthesis. "Synoptic" might be a better word to describe his book. The well-known incidents are set down one after the other, but they give the impression of a listing of facts in a catalogue rather than of a connected and significant narrative. Even in a purely synthetic work, the author must add to the material available to all some individual leaven of understanding if he is to perform a service to his readers. This Professor Neumann strives to do, but with little success. Instead of writing his story he seems to be writing *about* his story. He tells us again and again, for instance, that the war which has just ended was not only a war among nations, but a revolution; yet it remains a barren statement, which we must take on faith, without proof, or accept because we already knew it. He does not convince us, the nature of the war does not emerge from his pages, and though he pronounces for us the title of the great canvas which is his subject, he never paints the picture.

The value as guidance for the future of a book which does not make the past and the present live, which buries them beneath the dust of pedestrian history while they are still contemporary, is easy to doubt. That is especially true since Professor Neumann fails to draw clear conclusions from what is known and to project them into the future which is announced by the title of his book to be its subject. We are accustomed to titles which bear little relation to the contents of their books. This one establishes something of a record in this line.

"The Future in Perspective" is so complete a misnomer that one is obliged to conclude that the publishers chose it in desperation as the alternative of having to call it "Another Chronology of the Events of the Past Thirty-Five Years." Of the 384 pages of text which this book contains, 360 are devoted to a recital of international developments from 1914 to 1945. The last 24 pages do not really deal with the future either, whether with perspective or without. They provide the most confused and wandering section of the book, but so far as their content can be summarized, it deals with present problems, which will have to be met in the future of course, but in a future which Professor Neumann has plumbed no more deeply than any of us.

What remains of his objective is little more than an academic history of a period which has recently been described again and again, put together with industry but without inspiration. It is in the same category as the contemporary history of Professor Neumann's colleague, Frederick L. Schuman, but Professor Schuman does it much better. Not only does he add to the facts which are the common property of all those who want to work with them the understanding of their complete significance which makes the difference between a list and a book, but he assembles more facts with more care. He does possess inspiration. In addition, he operates with an industry greater than that of Professor Neumann.

—*From the book.*

Stresemann, Austen Chamberlain, Briand—"We are now only Europeans."

One of the reasons why this book never comes alive, though it seems perpetually on the point of doing so, may be a lack of courage. With this opinion, Professor Neumann is almost certain to disagree, for he writes of "the courage and resolution, the progressiveness and sense of detail typical of the academic mind," conscious, no doubt, of the fact that he himself is a member of the academic world. It is to be doubted whether many persons would accept this definition, except for its last item, including Webster's dictionary, which makes "academism" synonymous with "formalism." Conformity does not demand courage; on the contrary; and Professor Neumann seems anxious to conform. What authority has done may generally be counted upon to win his approval, and the heads of the great are all ringed with halos of equal brightness.

Thus, speaking of the Allies' global strategy in World War II, he finds that "great statesmanship and military genius share the glory of this rare combine of East and West." Later historians, writing from the perspective of the future, may admit military competence but it is hardly to be expected that they will discern great statesmanship in an era which has allowed the same disaster to overwhelm the world twice and is now engaged in preparing its third event.

Of the delay in opening the second front, he writes: "The key to the delay was this deep concern for manpower. The postwar world will be grateful for such circumspect planning." The first revelations of the postwar period have already demonstrated that the key to the delay was a difference in political conceptions, and to a certain extent also in military conceptions, between Britain and the United States, and that it was reluctant American acceptance of the British thesis which delayed the invasion of Europe. The world may still have reason to regret the choice.

General von Schleicher, that wily and ambitious intriguer, is a man with "a better grasp of the prevailing social forces . . . a better political outlook," a possessor of "shrewd political strategy" (so shrewd that he overplayed his hand and lost the chancellorship) and a man who "knew that a strong social basis was imperative for modern government. Marshal Pétain "willingly or unwillingly . . .

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might have served 'the cause' in the end." Neville Chamberlain "readily sacrificed prestige and precedence in behalf of peace. And the people were grateful to him." Unfortunately, he did not secure peace. The gratitude of the people to Chamberlain does not flame high today.

With the tendency to find no fault with what those in authority have done goes an optimism which nothing in Professor Neumann's account justifies. He believes, it would appear, that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. The Second World War, he discovers, "was turned by the superhuman efforts of the United Nations from a tragedy into a drama with a hopeful ending." Either Professor Neumann is wearing rose-colored glasses or I am wearing black ones. "There is no reason to despair" at the slowness of "world-wide order [to] materialize" because, after all, "it took centuries to effect the transition from feudal tribalism to the national *Rechtsstaat.*" How many centuries, one wonders, does Professor Neumann believe we will be allowed in which to reach world-wide order? Is it not one of the most important elements in our present situation that we have virtually no time to spare? Again: "Stalin brought the Soviet Union back into the world; and the West recognized its chance to undo untold damage of two decades. The fatal spell of isolation was broken. This is not the fulfillment of international cooperation, but it may be a beginning." It would be very nice to be able to believe this; but since it is so painfully evident that the great schism of our time is the antagonism between the pro-Soviet and the anti-Soviet world, which is being continually exacerbated by the processes of a sort of international *folie à deux,* few of us are going to be able to derive as much comfort as does Professor Neumann from the attitude of Russia and the West toward each other.

A book that is to serve as a guide to the future cannot be accepted as particularly trustworthy if it ignores the dangers and pitfalls that mark the route. "The historian," Professor Neumann quotes, "is a prophet looking backwards." That citation, and this book, bring to mind that other classic definition: "A historian is a man with one eye—in the *back* of his head." Even that single eye is too often myopic.

Cow Capital

SAN ANTONIO—CITY IN THE SUN. By Green Peyton. New York: Whittlesey House. 1946. 275 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by EDWIN L. SABIN

CONSIDERABLE latitude pertains in the statement that San Antonio, south central Texas, is about the size of Birmingham, Toledo, or St. Paul, but, specifically, San Antonio has four square miles of a Mexican population exceeded by only four cities in Mexico itself. Of its hotels by and large its namesake is the world's finest in service and appointments; there are also 417 restaurants, cafés, and open air establishments, all colors, and thirty-three "self-styled" night clubs. It is preeminent with the Alamo, Texas shrine of liberty, with ivied Fort Sam Houston of Old-Army traditions, and New-Army Randolph Field, the "West Point of the Air." It has a circulating inter-mural river improved by WPA and other appropriations to serve as a "watery Rialto." In addition to observing the special Texas celebrations of Robert E. Lee's birthday, Jefferson Davis's birthday, Texas Independence, San Jacinto Day, Texas Statehood Day, it holds annual revel in tribute to its San Antonio River. What with its string of Mexican fiestas it has more holidays than all California, but it is a cow capital which looks to Kansas City for its T-bone steaks.

It has a public library of 159,719 books with a per capita circulation ranking nationally, compared with that of other large-city libraries, fourth from the bottom—topping, Mr. Peyton would quote, the corresponding figures of only Houston, New Orleans, and Philadelphia. It has one bookseller, dealing chiefly in collectors' fine editions. But this indifference of San Antonio is merely a complacent state of mind. Brisk Dallas, up in the northeast, is allowed its dozen book shops, its book news pages, its annual book fair. San Antonio cleaves to its fleshpots. It simply is not very literate, and the thirty-six per cent Spanish-Indian citizenship is not cited as an excuse.

The library's annex museum of circus relics (20,000 items), a bequest of the late Harry Hertzberg, jeweler, and president of the Circus Fans of America, is more popular, with its mementoes of Barnum and Tom Thumb, and a miniature circus grounds occupied by a full show.

We learn that San Antonio has 150 churches, and also uncounted beer and jute-box joints which tend to promote a high venereal disease rate. The chuch of Our Lady of Guadalupe is devoted to welfare work among the Mexicans of the renovated slums. The visions of the new Presbyterian Trinity University embrace the national football championship and the title the Princeton of the Southwest.

As an army rendezvous, and the "Mother-in-Law of the Army," San Antonio has claims on Lee, Pershing, the MacArthurs, father and son, Eisenhower, Krueger, Wainwright, Doolittle, in a sequence of Regular Army notables extending from the Mexican War and Comanche days to the present interim of peace. It has also harbored citizen Jim Bowie, Ranger Captain Jack Hays, and Colonel Teddy Roosevelt of the Rough Riders among its other fighting men. It has been the Maverick family home for a hundred years, and for apparently a like period (although Mr. Peyton does not refer to the legend) domiciled ageless Señora Candelaria who asserted she was the last survivor of the Alamo defense company.

San Antonio is *Time's* news-center bureau covering Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and, Mexico on occasion—a spread of territory larger than Mongolia. It was first the Catholic mission San Antonio de Valero, dating from 1718, under protection of the presidio San Antonio de Béjar, long a favorite name for it. A company of cavalry from Mexico's pueblo San José y Santiago del Alamo, Saint Joseph and Saint James of the Cottonwood, may have attached the familiar title to the permanent mission, whose site was marked by a poplar or cottonwood tree. Imported Canary Islanders, 1731, laid out their town San Fernando de Béjar, the inception of the modern present town.

Much of the foregoing is upon the documentary order, but the book is no Chamber of Commerce issue. Mr. Peyton, a Virginia Wertenbaker, writes as a reporter and a Texan. By a series of feature chapters he gives San Antonio a thorough workout, socially, culturally, industrially, politically, ad lib., in an infectious narrative that occasionally has to overflow with little side remarks in parenthesis. We United States foreigners are inclined to make allowance for Texas gusto, but Green Peyton (his name as journalist) is so very, very honest in his own coverage that he is believable, the more so because he accents his Spanish, a real proof of verity. This reviewer (who, however, is an ex-Coloradan) had not suspected that San Antonio possessed much except the Alamo, and rows of Mexican adobes, and its army atmosphere. Besides, the reviewer knows persons who do not like San Antone as a station—but then, they are from California.

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Experiment In Understanding

The family Velasquez in their Charapan home. Son Pablo "is the village prodigal, the leader of the future."

OUR SON, PABLO. By Alvin and Darley Gordon. New York: Whittlesey House. 1946. 235 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by ELIZABETH FAGG

THE Gordons, whose business is movie-making, went to Mexico simply to shoot a documentary film. They returned home with a full-blooded Indian "son." Warm-spirited, kind, gay, and capricious enough for mild lunacies, the young motion picture couple could not turn a cold heart to their eager, Tarascan guide, age twenty-one, who helped them make their "Mexico Builds a Democracy." His fiery ambition to improve his Tarascan people moved them to invite him to the United States for the college education he yearned to have. He had aready "adopted" them anyway; so what could they do?

"Our Son, Pablo" is their story of the boy, as told by Alvin Gordon. It is a moderately humorous but inconsequential little book, interesting because the experiment was interesting, because Pablo was a nice chap and the Gordons nice people. Its message against racial and minority discriminations makes it worthwhile. Anyone familiar with the vast problem of the Indian populations in Latin America, and particularly in Mexico, will want to read it. Mexico's stumbling-block in creating a democracy has been the difficulty of incorporating into national life the Indian masses, about one-fourth of the total population. Primitive, destitute, without leadership, they are the inevitable vassals of the dominating groups. Mostly illiterate, they often do not even speak Spanish, but one of their own dialects. Pablo's Tarascans, numbering some 250,000, once boasted a fine culture whose art is being particularly discussed and exhibited this year in Mexico.

Pablo Velasquez arrived in Los Angeles in "bright yellow shoes, blue baggy corduroys, and old frayed jacket," looking less striking than in the serape and sombrero of his Michoacan mountains. "Allo. Ees Pablo," he said over the phone after they missed his plane; and that was the extent of his English. Nevertheless, he was duly enrolled in the University of California.

In the Gordons' home, Pablo sits under the "mechanical waterfall" half an hour each morning, learns to play jeeve on the radio while studying, discovers the alarm clock's bell; but the Gordons hesitate to interfere with "that ever dramatic moment" at breakfast each day when Pablo balances the whole egg yolk on the end of his knife.

One day he says, "Please. I weel keel my professor. . . . He gave me an E. Thees ees a great eensoolt." The E was in Spanish, which Pablo, a Mexican, hadn't learned until he was twelve. But Pablo makes good. He gains a two-year certificate of credits from the university, and comes out with honor marks. Admiring the college professor (except the one who had Spanish) above all men, he apes the type even to a pipe. He idolizes the printed word. An innate good taste guides him in his boy companions, music, dates.

When he left after two years, the Gordons missed their "son's" tall, slender figure, the dark, arresting face, white teeth, and broad smile. And when he wrote from the University of Mexico: "Dearest Mama and Papa, . . . I need to see you soon," they rushed to him. They found Pablo, proud and bitter, suffering loneliness from the resurging discrimination against the Indian, fanned anew by the growing *nouveau riche* class riding into power on Mexico's industrial revolution. Even in their presence he suffers insults — from other Mexicans, *mestizos*. But the Gordons preach tolerance, reason, change through evolution.

Pablo takes the Gordons to his almost inaccessible home village, Charapan, where the "foster" parents meet the real parents. Pablo's mother dresses in the pleated wool skirt and *rebozo*, his father in the sandals of the Tarascan villagers. Their windowless house with clay stoves is simple, the home of Indians. Before the barbecue which follows, one of Pablo's cousins drinks blood of the fresh killed lamb, shocking the Gordons. Pablo in new blue serge suit, with a new suitcase, is proud host. He is the village prodigal, the leader of the future.

The reader sees Pablo last, through the pages of a letter, as an ethnographer for the Smithsonian Institution and the National School of Anthropology of Mexico, studying his own Tarascan Indians. The Gordons are satisfied their experiment as Pygmalions has been successful. But if their Galatea should become one day a prominent leader of men in Mexico, it shouldn't be too surprising. In spite of discrimination, some of Mexico's outstanding figures, including several Presidents, have been full-blooded Indians.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: NO. 167

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 167 will be found in the next issue.

BCD AFGEDH CD BKASDE FW

CNM CFOFH, BCD WKMBDH

LD PFGOBDE FGH MTFFOM.

HKATC L. DRDHMFO

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 166

Example is the school of mankind, and they will learn at no other.

E. BURKE

—On a Regicide Peace.

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Hollywood Ahoy!

THE SALEM FRIGATE. By John Jennings. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc. 1946. 500 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by FLETCHER PRATT

HERE'S an odd book. In form it is grouped around the famous frigate *Essex*, gift of Salem to the United States in 1799, and it is the story of one of the men who both built and sailed in her (a ne'er-do well Harvard lad turned carpenter) and of one who only sailed in her, a surgeon. Since the story theoretically belongs to the ship, it is arranged that they are aboard during *Essex's* cruise to the East Indies, the actions off Tripoli, and in the great raid to the Pacific under David Porter during the War of 1812.

In content the book is the carefully confected lending library best seller, complete with lengthy narrative, fascinating villain, hero true as steel who suffers for another's fault, a couple of spicy seduction scenes for the suburban trade, a tale of a girl's lifelong devotion though she is married to another man, a mild amount of tragedy, and lovers falling into each others' arms as the audience begins to put on its coats. The research is the sort one might expect from a good Hollywood production. Historical characters stroll across the scene, as satisfyingly characteristic as they can be made during a brief appearance. A leg is amputated in detail and with efficiency. The right kind of food is on the table and the right kind of clothes on people's backs. It probably will matter to very few readers that Captain Porter gives as his reason for the great raid the fact that 86 per cent of England's internal lighting comes from whale oil and 79 per cent of this from the Pacific fisheries. Those readers will not know or will not pause to think that Porter was a bad-tempered buccaneer who never thought in economic terms in his life. Nor will they mind that most of the other characters speak the dialect of the radio soap operas except when they are consciously using an archaic word, such as "tissick." What do the internals matters if the externals are faithful?

This is where the oddity of the book appears. In the sea passages there are long stretches of undisguised historical narrative with only the first person plural pronoun substituted for the narrative third person. Porter's own journal of the Pacific raid is far better reading, and, for the Tripolitan passages, Preble's correspondence. The main love story hangs on the flimsiest and most hackneyed of all literary devices—the innocent wife found in another man's arms, whose husband will listen to no explanation, and the misunderstanding made permanent by a letter left accidentally unopened. That is, all through what should be the essential parts of the book one is conscious of effort by the author, of a duty to be done, of a task to be accomplished.

But the story requires the main characters to be taken prisoner by the Tripolitans and to escape for an unhistorical march across the Libyan desert; the very narrative of the *Essex* requires them to go to Nukahiva. In these episodes everything takes fire, everything is interesting. People behave as people do in emergencies—cowardice and courage, ingenuity and stupidity strangely mingled. The most genuine personalities in the book are the desert Arabs and the savages of the Marquesas; they even contrive to lend some of their genuineness to the lay figures who are supposed to be carrying the story. Put it this way—Mr. Jennings has a talent for imaginitive writing about the far away and long ago and a high degree of narrative skill. That talent carries the reader past even the most contrived and wooden episodes in the main tale and lends a positive fascination to the subsidiary stories. But a good deal of this talent appears to have been wasted on a rather deliberate effort toward a fat sale to Hollywood.

Epigram for All the Slain

By Alfred Kreymborg

THE tremendous young men who review your books
After one sniff and a couple of looks,
As if they were all of Infinity
And you but as small as the crawling grass,
Will also grow and will likewise pass
Or gain a more proper perspective as
They're slain by the next Divinity.
And then you may laugh at their epitaph.

Northern Athens

A PAGEANT OF OLD SCANDINAVIA. Edited by Henry Goddard Leach. Princeton: Princeton University Press for The American-Scandinavian Foundation. 1946. 350 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by HOLGER LUNDBERGH

THIS fascinating and inclusive anthology forms an enormous canvas, vivid, colorful, and populated with gods, warriors, bards, swordsmen, sailors, court jesters, queens, and soothsayers from the Norse mythology and from Scandinavian history, literature, and romance. There are 116 selections, taken from the famous Eddas and sagas up to the fourteenth century. In addition to a splendid introduction on old Scandinavian literature, Dr. Leach has added a section devoted to the sources used and a guide to selected reading. In addition, each chapter, or section, is headed by an admirable brief introductory paragraph which deftly sets the scene and presents the characters.

In his foreword the editor points out, among many other interesting facts, that it was Iceland that became the Athens of the North. However, while the literature of Iceland, like that of Athens, was mostly native, it was stimulated by contact with Ireland and Constantinople. Next to Iceland, Norway was the richest source of ballads and sagas. It was here, as early as in the ninth century, "that poets began to eschew the simpler eddic forms of verse and to compose in the more elaborate skaldic meter," which required not only alliteration but internal rhymes and assonances as well. Sweden and Denmark also contributed their share, less voluminous, but still important, and so did some of the Western Islands, such as the Faeroes and the Orkneys.

The plots of the sagas, Dr. Leach reminds us, are slight variations of one central theme and are often "developments of conflict between personal choice and social code." "Manhood," he writes, "is valued above virtue, for the good is a variable and incommensurable quality, while manhood is an instinctive ethic. The pragmatic science of life is more to be praised than metaphysics." An apt definition, and one which is amply borne out to the reader of this well-winnowed book.

Dr. Leach, who for several decades has wisely and successfully guided the American-Scandinavian Foundation, has compiled an eminently readable, well documented volume.

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Three American Poets

THE NORTHERN STRANGER. By Lysander Kemp. New York: Random House. 1946. 77 *pp.* $2.

DOORS TO A NARROW HOUSE. By Margaret Stavely. New York: The Hobson Book Press. 107 *pp.* $2.50.

ULTIMATUM FOR MAN. By Peggy Pond Church. Stanford University: James Ladd Delkin. 32 *pp.*

Reviewed by WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

MR. KEMP'S book is a first book, and contains forty-one poems written while he was in the United States Army in the Caribbean, in Panama, Ecuador, and Puerto Rico. But he is not in the least merely an army poet. He is a sensitive writer with an almost photographic eye, and he gives us occasional memorable lines, "His uniform is handsome but they wear poverty" (of the little Ecuadorian soldiers), "the dark grief of the Indian," "a woman sags in the door of a mountain shack," "sprawls in the hot field weeping," "'Peace in our time,' he lisped as smooth as slime," and of the sloth,

> He dangles topsy-turvy out on a branch
> of this forever spring, in coat of buff
> and all day chumbling into his umber face,

and "the perilous chain-lightning of ideas."

He brings nothing very new in thought, by field or flood or foreign clime, but he brings vivid pictures, and spare honesty in such a poem as "After." This is a good first book.

The poetry of Margaret Stavely challenges and disturbs. It is sometimes extraordinarily effective, albeit ugly, as in "Proigignere." The first stanza, for instance, spares you nothing, but it is the first of four that build up a strong and tragic picture of childbirth:

> The girl who was going to have a baby
> let her loose tears smudge the wrinkled sheet,
> and squirmed around the clamor in her belly
> from the angry shoving of its feet.

But that is merely naturalistic, I had thought, too, that when she wrote such a verse as

> As the mad gnats strike toward a globe of light
> outside the porch, the stranger's unknown face
> begins to edge in from a silhouette
> upon my mind, and fill a vacant place.

and particularly in her queer poem. "Madam sits upon the floor," she had learned from the earlier T. S. Eliot, but I understand that she wrote the latter before she had ever read anything of Eliot's. Her idea in writing a poem, she contends, is "to start mental images flowing in the reader's mind, much as water rings out from a stone thrown in it." This is a familiar aim, but in it she succeeds better than most. She creates an atmosphere in some of her poems that is too full-blooded to be called decadent. Obviously she has not found the world of what passes for love between men and women an altogether pleasant place. "Renewal" is evidence. But this and the following "Conquest of Meriam" are certainly remarkable poems. There are others. And though her long poem, "The Saga of Matamah Shah," does not quite come off, it has in it wit and accomplishment. And in almost every poem there is something that piques the interest, not wholly because of the poet's disenchantment, bitterness grown of sophisticated experience, or a certain hardness she sems to cultivate. When I first read her "Margaret, Cecily, and Veronica," which *The Saturday Review* printed, I knew that a new poet of individuality had appeared. I know that her book deserves a much better presentation than her publisher has been able to give it. I would warn her against a tendency toward the sensational. But at twenty-eight she has made a striking beginning.

The poetry of Peggy Pond Church has nobility. In the present book she has grown, it seems to me, much beyond her earlier work. She handles either rhyme and metre or free verse well. "At Night's Beginning" is a good example of her natural emotional feeling for the world, "Vital Statistics" of her musing on American lineage. An arresting poem is "School Boy," that trenchantly presents the mercilessness of the young learned from their elders. "Horses in Moonlight" has appealed to me. Here is the last stanza (good despite the use of "master" after "masters"):

> Sleep and do not look on his strange scene, my lords and masters,
> lest you feel them clearing the careful fences of your own minds,
> possessing your unaccustomed hearts in breath-taking beauty,
> and a wildness your hand cannot tame
> and a strength your knees can never master.

In general, Mrs. Church's poetry is distinctly of this time, the work of a fine human being concerned with the terror of the hour.

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

IT'S A NEAT TRICK—IF YOU CAN DO IT

Some remarkably difficult (though not supernatural or utterly impossible) feats have been performed by characters in fiction. From the brief descriptions below can you identify the characters and name the stories in which they appear? Allowing 5 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 27.

1. When an irate caller bent the fireplace poker double, this man calmly straightened it with only a slight jerk.
2. So supple was this elderly gentleman that he could balance an eel on the end of his nose.
3. A favorite stunt of this lad was to hang on to the edge of the kitchen table and swing vigorously back and forth.
4. Balanced on the outside of a sloping third-story window sill, this carefree soldier drank a whole bottle of rum without pausing for breath and without hanging on to anything.
5. His only talent was to juggle six copper balls with his feet and, bending backward until his neck touched his heels, to keep a dozen knives in the air.
6. Because he failed to salute a tyrant's hat, this crossbow expert was required to shoot an apple off his son's head at 100 yards.
7. With a bow which none of his rivals could even bend he shot an arrow through the hollow rings of 12 axe handles set in a straight line.
8. After a solid year of practising in the carriage shed, this farm boy went to the state fair and was able to throw embroidery rings over every prize in the hoop-la stand.
9. In an archery contest this yeoman outshot all the king's men and then topped off the performance by splitting a willow wand no thicker than a man's thumb at 100 yards.
10. To prevent a bell from ringing the signal for her lover's execution, this maiden leaped out into space and clung to the clapper as the bell swung to and fro.

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TRADE Winds

PUBLISHERS HAVE SPENT fruitless years trying to persuade editors of the big women's magazines that a monthly column of book notes and reviews would make a sound feature. Now Bernardine Kielty's lively "Under-Cover Stuff," prominently displayed in every *Ladies' Home Journal*, comes as an answer to their prayers. In addition to this chore, Bernardine (Mrs. Harry Scherman in private life) reads manuscripts and conducts the "Authors Between Books" department for the *Book-of-the-Month Club News*, and has edited "A Treasury of Short Stories," 93 famous tales of the past 150 years, with biographical sketches of the authors, for December publication by Simon & Schuster. When somebody suggested that this just about made her the Woman of the Year in book circles, Bernardine gave a deprecatory chuckle and said, "I'd give it all up if I only could persuade Harry that when I double a three spade bid I mean business." . . .

BETTY MACDONALD, whose "The Egg and I" is one of the phenomena of the decade in the publishing world, is hard at work on another book, at the moment tentatively tagged "The Plague and I." This will be based on Mrs. MacDonald's own experiences as a patient in the Firland Tuberculosis Sanitarium, Seattle, eight years ago. She was there for something less than a year, and emerged completely cured —plus a voluminous diary that is now standing her in good stead. . . . Mrs. Scherman's column contains the account of a luncheon given in Betty MacDonald's honor: "Sitting at a great oval table at the Ritz in New York, beaming across a magnificent centerpiece of flowers, she certainly looked remote from the ranch wife who used to get up at five A.M. to deal with a refractory stove and feed the fowls. In fact, she was late for this particular luncheon, and rumor had it that she had overslept!" . . . A gratified if unexpected participant in "The Egg and I" windfall is one Mrs. Alfred Larson, who now occupies the chicken ranch Mrs. MacDonald made famous, and is doing a land-office business conducting sightseers over the premises at two bits a head. Furthermore, the crowds seem to stimulate the chickens. Egg production is way over par. . . .

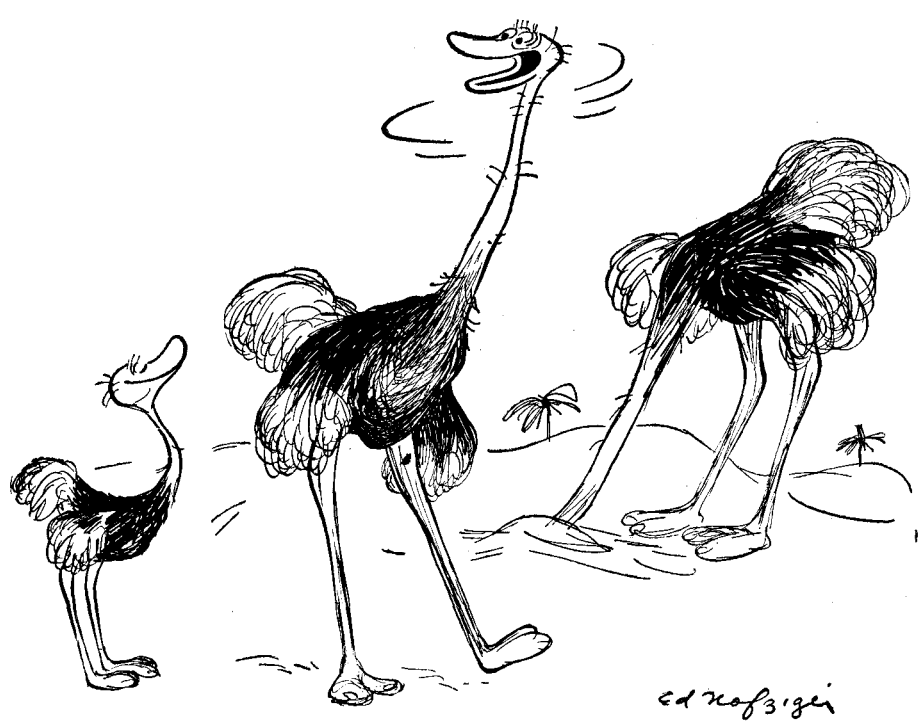
HAROLD GUINZBURG, head of the Viking Press, discusses the cost of books in a recent *Authors' League Bulletin*. "People are often puzzled," he says, "by the wide discrepancy between the price at which a book sells and the amount which the author receives as royalties. They suspect that the cost of paper, printing, and binding accounts for only a small portion of the spread."

After analyzing all the editorial, promotion, advertising, sales, and shipping costs that limit profits in book publishing today, Guinzburg reminds readers that they inevitably think in terms of the retail price of a book. "Actually," he says, "the publisher receives less than sixty per cent of what the customer pays. Compared to some other forms of merchandise, the retailer's margin is high, but few booksellers have ever grown rich, and there is no evidence that they can do business on any less than they receive."

Guinzburg also points out that a book publisher's business is based on averages. "Some successful authors may feel that this system works unfairly against them," he says, "but it is the long established tradition of the trade, and is responsible for the wide variety of titles that are published. It enables the beginner to get a hearing, and makes possible the publication of books of merit which might otherwise never reach the public." In other words, one big best seller more than recovers the losses on a dozen worthy, but commercially hopeless, publications.

"Often publishers do not know in advance which book will prove profitable," Guinzburg admits. "In many cases, they are pretty sure a book will not pay its own way, but they still issue it, either because they hope for something more profitable from the author another time, or because they think it adds distinction to a list, or because they have made a contract, or sometimes for rather vague reasons which can only be put down as a general feeling of obligation to their occupation. In a sense, publishers have always kidded themselves and, as a result, shown a willingness to produce many books which a careful analytical accountant would throw out without hesitation. The fact that they look at their total figures rather than at the results on individual titles is in part responsible for making wide variety possible." . . .

ALL THE WAY from Norway comes the story of a famous novelist who was invited to the prevue of a new three-million-dollar motion picture. "I liked it," he said at the conclusion of the showing. "Who wrote it?" "You did," said the producer. "It's based on your last book!" "I never would have known it," admitted the writer. "I think it has the makings of a fine novel. May I use it?" "I guess so," said the producer, "but you'll have to give us an option on the film rights!" . . . *Tide* tells how the *Philadelphia Inquirer* had a photo of Joe Louis knocking out Conn a full hour before they were available by wirephoto (but



"All right, I give up, where *did* you hide daddy?"

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fails to give the name of the resourceful reporter who conceived the idea). The *Inquirer* simply posted a photographer at a nearby television set; in the eighth round, he snapped the picture on the screen and scored a real beat. . . . A Viennese refugee swears solemnly that he heard a man accost the author of "The World's Illusion" and ask, "Are you Dr. Wassermann?" "I am," said the novelist. The man's next question was "Are you positive?" . . . Neatest publisher's colophon of the year: David McKay's distinguishing mark for its series of "Armchair Mysteries." . . . Robert Malloy's new novel, "Uneasy Spring," will be serialized by *Good Housekeeping* and published by Macmillan in time for the holidays. . . . Dr. Gordon Seagrave, the Burma Surgeon, arrives here in October for a three-month transcontinental lecture tour. . . . Sign in the window of a second-hand bookshop in California: "We Buy Old Furniture and Books. We Sell Rare Antiques." . . .

A WEEK END AT Billy Rose's modest sixty-acre Mount Kisco retreat is generally good for a hundred solid laughs. . . . The host taps out a handful of columns that he is distributing to newspapers absolutely for free. (They are wonderful publicity for Mr. Rose—and the papers gobble them up not only because the price is right, but because they are terse, original, and amusing.) . . . Quentin Reynolds lumbers around the tennis court in a pair of rolled-up duck pants, a sweat shirt, and a huge sombrero, beating the ears off players who learned from Donald Budge. . . . His beautiful wife, Ginny, applauds from the sidelines. . . . Bill Mauldin tells about the book he is beginning for publication by William Sloane Associates. . . . Wes Bernie remembers a story about a young couple romancing earnestly on a park bench. Two mongrel pups watch them intently, and one asks the other, "Think we should throw cold water on them?" . . . Song publisher Chester Conn exclaims over the galleys of Mezz Mezzrow's "Really the Blues," while Eddie Duchin picks out a melody on the piano. . . . The talk turns to David Selznick's production of "Duel in the Sun." Somebody remembers David's explanation to a reporter that he accomplishes so much by occasionally working around the clock. "Take last Tuesday for instance," he is quoted as saying. "I worked twenty-four hours straight—right through the night." At the close of the interview a secretary (no longer there) is supposed to have told the reporter, "Mr. Selznick neglected to add that he stayed in bed all day Wednesday and Thursday." . . . The hostess, Eleanor Holm Rose, beats the male guests at ingles, and, while they sink exhausted on to a bench, adds insult to injury by swimming thirty lengths of the pool. . . . On Sunday night, the guests stagger homeward, hoping that a few quiet days at the office will put them in shape for further week-end "relaxation." . . .

IN LONDON, shortly before the war began, the literary set turned out en masse for a banquet in honor of a distinguished American publisher, just then winding up his twenty-fifth annual visit to the shores of Albion.

Numerous British luminaries felt that the occasion demanded elaborate expressions of esteem for the guest of honor, but, while they went on and on orating, the subject of their encomiums unfortunately went on and on imbibing whiskies and soda. When he finally was called upon to speak himself, only a herculean effort enabled him to get to his feet. He swayed dizzily, blinked at his audience, and suddenly remarked very clearly, "Gentlemen, as I was saying—." With this he sat down and promptly fell asleep.

Most of the audience was visibly stunned, but the English publisher Jonathan Cape commented drily, "Brief, what?"

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

THE short story, once looked upon by publishers as something of an unsound venture, has appealed to more and more people, to the point where last year's twenty-seventh annual **O'Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories** sold over 14,000 copies. This year's, the twenty-eighth, is again edited by HERSCHEL BRICKELL, who is assisted by MURIEL FULLER, and three judges, Hudson Strode, Helen Hull, and James Gray. As usual, there are three prizes and the special award of $100 for the best "first" story of the year. This year, the twenty-two stories include ones by Kay Boyle, Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Irwin Shaw, Victor Ullman, Eudora Welty, and Jessamyn West. There's variety here, and fine writing. It might also be good to mention that there are biographical sketches of each of the twenty-two authors and an introduction to the whole business by Brickell. Will someone please give me another word for exciting, (which is now doing overtime) so that I can say this book makes..... reading.

* * *

After his fifth coca cola, I wangled permission from our executive editor to write a little thing on a book by a friend of mine, NELSON GIDDING, a book published just now by Viking, and called **End Over End.**

End Over End means the way a guy sometimes falls when he bails out; and in this case it means the way his thoughts fall when he is a prisoner of war in solitary confinement. **End Over End** (if only I had elbow room here) is one of the most remarkably told stories you'll ever read. An American flyer, Dale Stribling, bails out north of Rome, is captured, is imprisoned, plans escape. The Germans may have captured Stribling's body, but GIDDING frees his mind. "Psychological novel?" you ask. Sure, and what good novel isn't! "War Story?" Sure, and every book written about peacetime is a peace story.

This guy GIDDING has one of the best senses of humor and sense of humors since Mark Twain, and in his writing are all the bells that ever toll, even for Hemingway, all the anguish, all the darkness and light that make it a literary mutation, a new——, but the proof of the GIDDING is in the reading.

paul

DOUBLEDAY

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Seeing Things

ENGLAND AT PEACE

IN the days of the buzz bombs, a story came out of London which rocketed its way across the Atlantic. In a few words it sought to point out how different are the British and American attitudes to the law. The story should have been true, even if it wasn't. There was that much truth to it.

A bus was supposed to be going down Piccadilly. Among those crowded on its upper deck was an American war correspondent. Suddenly, to the consternation of everyone aboard, a buzz bomb could be seen—and heard—heading for the bus from the opposite direction. All the people topside spread themselves down on the floor like bear rugs, including the correspondent. The bus came to a full stop; the buzz bomb didn't. For an agonizing second the passengers saw that it was speeding nearer and nearer. Just before it would have crashed into the bus, the driver started his motor and drove to the other side of the street. The bomb went on its way. So did the bus.

The passengers got up and took their seats. But not the American correspondent. Alarmed and angry, he rushed down below to the British driver.

"For God's sake," he cried, "what did you stop for? Didn't you see that damned bomb coming?"

The driver was politeness itself.

"Oh, indeed I did, sir," he replied. "But by any chawnce did you happen to see the red light?"

What I expected England to be like this time I do not know, except that, not unreasonably, I thought she would be different from the Britain I had known during the war. I had fancied that, with the pressure lifted, the dangers gone, and the victory won, life would be easier for her people. The mere thought of peace is full of promise.

As we began to fly across her fields and towns, the emotions with which I had seen them in wartime returned. So did the images of the two winters I had spent there. They were startled into life; nudged into recollection as forgotten memories are by the sight of the places with which they are associated.

They came back suddenly. Not wholesale; piecemeal. In brightly colored patches. Kaleidoscopically. People, places, incidents, voices, street scenes and buildings . . . The sight and roar of our planes going out by day, the drone of the Germans coming in by night . . . The swish of rocket guns . . . The glory of the moonlight on the white-faced buildings of London . . . The weighty thickness of the blackout . . . The dark sky shredded with tracers . . . The tinkle of broken glass as it was swept up on the streets in the early morning . . . These memories came trooping back, especially as we began to circle down and the outskirts of London rose from the ground to meet us. They returned with a vividness which I had feared was gone forever.

Yet, even when seen from above, there was a difference. There was no avoiding it, or wanting to. It made itself felt at once. It had boarded our Constellation long before we landed. It was like a boulder lifted from one's chest. The sky now admitted only friendly planes. The threat of death, which becomes part of one's normal breathing in a target area, was no longer in the air.

THE sky was clear as we taxied up to the line of mud-brown tents which served the new airport at Heathrow as its administration buildings. Being an English sky, the always surprising presense of the sun made it seem doubly gay. It was something of a miracle even for June. The porters and the customs officials grumbled about the lack of spring. April had been what April should be in England. Since then, however, they said, it had been wet and cold, raining for at least a part of the past fifty days.

But it was clear this early afternoon. And clear as we drove by bus into London. An illusion of color was everywhere. The sunshine took the place of paint. There were flowerboxes in many of the windows. The grass, first in the open fields, then in the parks and squares, was an unparched green. The trees were a deeper, bluer green, as wet and glistening as if freshly painted in water-colors. The children's cheeks were as red as hunting coats. On block after block the naked spaces where buildings had stood hid behind the fireweed which now bloomed on them. Even the ruins of blitzed buildings were not as noticeable as they had been. What man had destroyed nature had already fought its rapid battle to reclaim. Although the wounds of war were plentiful, they had healed into scars. These did not invite attention; they evaded it.

Everywhere there were flags and strips of bunting as joyous proofs that the Victory Celebration was still in progress. At a first re-meeting London seemed less lacerated than I remembered, and more festive than I anticipated.

I was tired when I went to bed that night; tired from the flight; tired from being catapulted from one world to another without transition, or that pause for readjustment which an ocean voyage makes possible. I was tired, too, from the excitements of being in London again, and from being pushed about by the holiday crowds assembled in Trafalgar Square to see the illuminated fountains. But I was not so tired that I did not look forward to doing what I had been unable to do in wartime. This (oh, luxury of luxuries!) was to read in bed with the windows open, not bothering about the blackout curtains or the light that spilled out into the darkness from my room.

I walked to the window eagerly to enjoy that sure guarantee of the presence of peace—lights shining gaily, unconcernedly, in other windows. When I opened my own, I could not believe my eyes. Two mighty searchlights were fingering the sky above the roofs opposite, converging on some distant point in the clouds above. For an uncomfortable instant I wondered why I had not heard the Alert. Until I remembered the Victory Celebration, I was convinced the war was on again.

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To the British it must often have seemed that the war was still on. Even their passion for law could not have been left unstrained by the continued hardships the peace had brought them. They had come triumphantly through the long tunnel but not into the light of which they had dreamed. The blood was over; the sweat and the toil remained. So, sometimes, did the cause for tears.

Travel impressions are as dangerous as they are unavoidable. Ask yourself how accurately you can gauge the feelings or happenings in your own town (much less your own country), and you realize how suspect such reports are. That you find yourself away from the familiar may quicken your perceptions. Distance, however, does not reduce your fallibility.

WHEN you try to rise to a generality, you cannot escape from the particular. The particular in this instance is yourself; yourself, your prejudices, your limitations, your interests, and the very special chances for observation which may have been yours. At those moments when you surrender to the temptation of saying "the English think so-and-so," you are usually reporting no more than what you yourself thought in England. And what you thought is what you were led to think because of the people you saw there, the places you visited, the moment of your visit, or what you may have read or heard while there.

All the people I talked to in England—whether the maid doing my room, men in politics, clerks in stores, guests at a dinner, writers or artists, miners in Wales, taxi drivers, publishers, or chance acquaintances on trains—admitted they were tired. They confessed this regardless of how well they looked. On this point Tories and Laborites were in strong agreement. They blamed their diet, and some of them even pointed to Wimbledon for proof. There, although the English players had started off well, they had been beaten, and badly beaten, in almost all of their second sets. "It's the food," my English friends would say. "Our players just haven't got the endurance."

They all talked food. It was a topic uppermost in their minds and Parliament. Mr. Strachey was then under severe daily attack by the bakers, by the consumers, by the Opposition, and by some members of his own party. Bread rationing had just been announced. A people who had scrimped and queued, and queued and scrimped, had been told that, if they went to a restaurant and ordered bread, that bread was to count as one

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of the three courses they were allowed.

The coal situation was growing worse and worse. For want of feed much livestock was to be slaughtered. The slim supply of milk was due for a further reduction. Families lucky enough to have farms in the country or to keep a few chickens in their backyards, and hence have eggs to eat, now realized that their poultry was doomed. If someone scraped together enough rations to give a party, some of the food served so hospitably was apt to have been sent as a gift by a friend in America. Every indication was that the coming winter would be both lean and cold. No wonder many had at first been opposed to the Victory Celebrations, arguing they had nothing to celebrate. Less wonder that all of them talked of food.

Even in peacetime English food, except at its best, is not too much to talk about. Britain's major conquests usually are not culinary. When I was there this summer, people were not starving. But, although there was enough to eat, everyone was compelled to eat far too much of the same things. The diet was painfully lacking in variety. It sustained; it filled; it sometimes bloated; but it did not interest. At restaurants it was so starchy that you ended a meal feeling you had swallowed a dress shirt.

The acute absence of fats was enough to discourage even a good cook. It meant most things were boiled, including the fish which was then plentiful. There was no other choice. Being British-boiled meant that it was boiled, and boiled, and boiled.

White bread was unseen. An adult continued to be lucky if he got one orange and one egg a month. Spam was almost as much in evidence as it had been during the war. So were powdered eggs. Candies were difficult to find. Hard liquor was scarce and prohibitive; the beer weak and watery. Except for the dab of jam or marmalade served at breakfast, and for rhubarb and cherries both stewed, or the fresh cherries then in season, the diet was almost fruitless. Peaches, on pushcarts in the streets, when they did appear, fetched fabulous prices. Bananas were only incredible memories. One ate to be fed, not for the fun of eating.

A worker in the WVS had told me at the time of the Baby Blitz that she had her own way of noting how Britain's diet was telling on her people even then. "Why," she had said, "do you know, if one of our girls loses a member of her family during a raid, she now asks for three days off? She'd never have thought of doing that during the real Blitz. A half-day would have been enough." Since the Baby Blitz the buzz bomb had come, then the V-2's, and finally (and almost as shattering) the peace which had brought so little respite from war's privations and inconveniences. Furthermore, no relief was in prospect. This, too, was wearying.

People were tired at not being able to get paint or materials with which to fix up their battered homes. Or at having to wait a year and a half to do so if, after signing petition after petition to the Government, they were fortunate enough to procure them. Office workers were exhausted by queues. So were housewives. They were worn down by being unable to

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buy clothes and by having to cope always with rations for what they could purchase.

"Do you know how we know we are tired?" Britisher after Britisher said to me. "We get along all right until suddenly things go wrong and we have to make a quick decision. Then we find that our tempers are not as good as they ought to be. They snap under the strain."

The English were also suffering from a form of claustrophobia. Although a nation of great travelers, most of them had been confined to the target area of England for the six long years of the war. What is more, they had not been able to get away since. They felt trapped. They needed a change. Naturally, whenever they could, they went over to Denmark, Sweden, or Ireland for their vacations. They wanted to taste cream again, and have plentiful butter on plentiful bread. They wanted eggs and fruits and different kinds of meats.

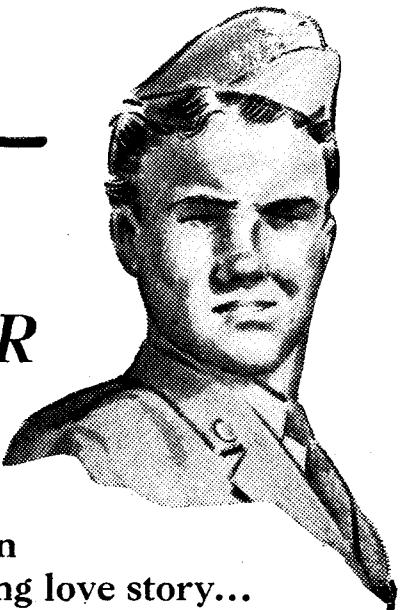
Although the British talked a lot and complained, they did not grumble. Certainly they did not whine. Nor did they try to evade what was the law. Though no doubt there was a black market, it did not figure in most people's thinking. It was impossible to avoid the sense of moral fibre that, in the midst of so much fatigue, somehow managed to remain unwearied.

But, tired as the English people said they were, and as they had the right to be, there was, nonetheless, something peculiarly invigorating in the atmosphere of England. There was the sense of something large happening. Of the old conservative England embarked upon the experiment of her Labor Government, and of a new England in the process of emergence. The awareness of this in the midst of so much ruin and fatigue was tremendously exhilarating.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Sherlock Holmes, in "The Speckled Band," by Arthur Conan Doyle
2. Father William, in "Alice in Wonderland," by Lewis Carroll.
3. Giles, in "The Cloister and the Hearth," by Charles Reade.
4. Dolohov, in "War and Peace," by Leo Tolstoi.
5. Barnabas, in "Our Lady's Juggler," by Anatole France.
6. "William Tell," by Schiller.
7. Ulysses, in "The Odyssey," by Homer.
8. Wayne Frake, in "State Fair," by Phil Stong.
9. Locksley (or Robin Hood), in "Ivanhoe," by Sir Walter Scott.
10. Bessie, in "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight," by Rose Hartwick Thorpe.



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HEARING THINGS

MUSIC AND THE SEASONS

SUMMER brings with it flourishing and popular outdoor concerts which attract legions of listeners. Nothing demonstrates more convincingly the genuine love of music of Americans in all walks of life than the large and enthusiastic crowds that assemble in the parks and athletic fields to hear our symphony orchestras in their summer togs. But this also proves that something is wrong with our "winter" concerts and their management. If ten or fifteen thousand people go to hear a concert in July there is no reason why the same number would not go on a frosty November evening. We hasten to forestall the objections of those who would say that the summer concerts are much more popular in tone and program; aside from a few special Gershwin concerts, the backbone of the programs is taken from what is so quaintly known as the "standard symphonic repertory," and the few "popular" items thrown in by the program makers with the intent of reimbursing people for listening to Brahms would be most welcome in the standard and austere repertory of the regular season.

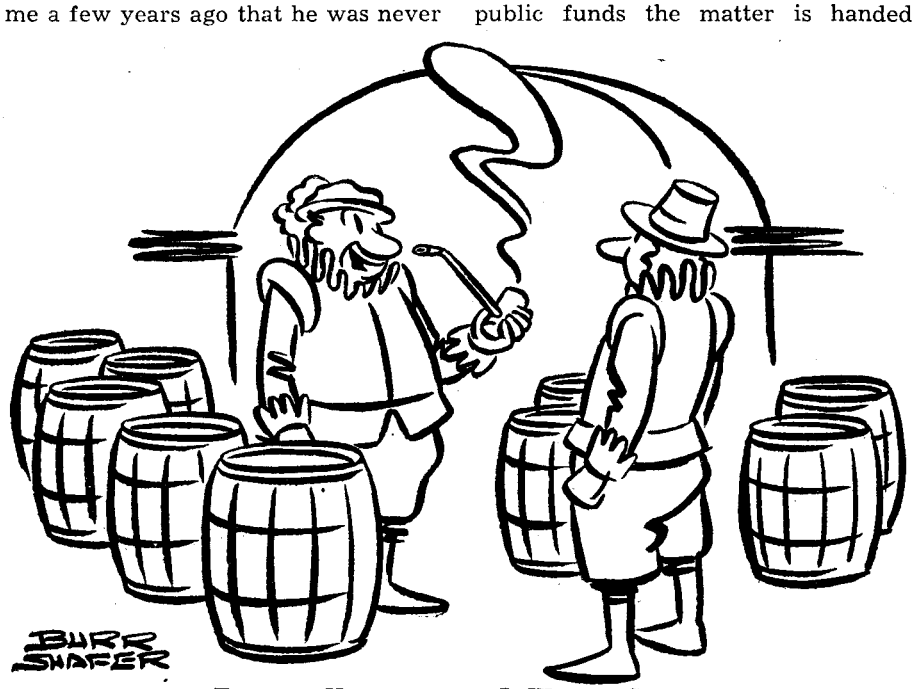
Moreover, we might add that the full houses that responded to the City Center Orchestra's venture indicate that New York City could support five good orchestras. Paris, much smaller than New York, and with a public not nearly so fond of music as ours, supports a number of orchestras, and on a Sunday afternoon one can choose from several programs. It is hard to understand why the American public's appetite cannot be satisfied and why our orchestras end every year with a deficit.

For one thing, the high command of our operatic and symphonic organizations rests in the hands of amateurs; it is still a social game. There was a time when the high and mighty could afford to maintain an opera house or a symphonic orchestra; in fact, it used to be the hallmark of social eminence to own a yacht and to be a director of the Metropolitan Opera Association; nothing ate up money faster than those two diversions. Still, the wealthy of the past years did carry the burden and underwrote the deficits while singers and managers grew rich on a sumptuous mismanagement. Nevertheless, in many instances the artistic level these people maintained was of considerable excellence. Gatti-Cassazza, to mention one example, a man as indifferent to American cultural aims and aspirations as anyone could be, still presented his backers with good performances. The managers and impresarios of today are running an airtight industrial monopoly without regard for anything but business returns. The Attorney General's office, diligently watching the various industries for signs of monopolistic trust combinations, would find a wide field for action in the harmonious world of music, complete with forced bookings, tie-in sales, discrimination, restriction, and all of the other known and accepted tricks of big business.

All one has to do is to glance at the concert programs of our major cities. A few dozen "great names" make the rounds of the musical markets, peddling the same wares year after year. Their programs, with a few laudable exceptions, are cautious, monotonous, and stereotyped; there is no planning, unless the careful avoidance of originality and a refusal to recognize the rights of contemporary civilization can be called a plan. A distinguished young conductor told me a few years ago that he was never permitted to execute a program of his own choice; the selections always were scrutinized and dictated "from above."

One might ask naïvely, "Isn't it simple enough to give good programs, charge reasonable admission fees? The public is there waiting." Well, it is not so simple, for all this costs money. Yet the expenses of a symphony orchestra could be materially reduced if the gentleman farmers would leave the field to the musical dirt farmer. The orchestra board should be composed of a majority of professionals with a number of creative musicians among them. And the orchestra should have its own management, administered by members from its own ranks; the manager should not be a member of any cartel.

All this brings us to the great American obstacle which prevents the unhampered flourishing of the art of music in this country: the unreasonable hostility to federal, state, or municipal subsidy for art. We have publicly supported educational and scientific institutions, museums, and other organizations; we are immediately willing to absorb a tax assessment if the community wants to build a swimming pool or a recreation center, but an opera house or a symphony orchestra for the people by the people's money is taboo. Everyone likes to boast of the unrivalled excellence of the Met among the great theatres of the world and of the superiority of our symphony orchestras over their European counterparts (these are opinions that require qualification), but when it comes to subsidies out of public funds the matter is handed



THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"All I know is that a man named Guy Fawkes asked me to watch these barrels."

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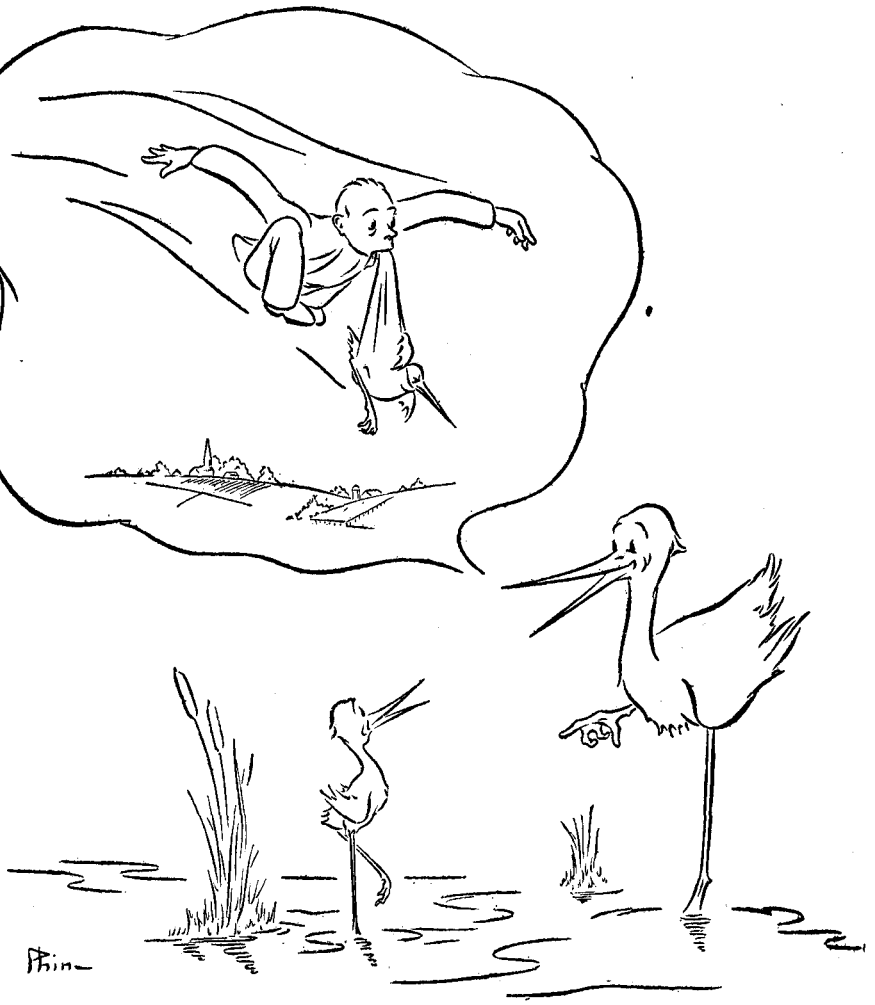

over to the "rich" who, in turn, the times being what they are, appeal to the public. But then why are the former the directing officials of opera associations and orchestra boards? It is painful in this day and age to see the antics of the Metropolitan Opera Guild, or the private concerts given for the patrons of the Philharmonic-Symphony Society in one of the large hotels. The programs are invariably on the "pretty" side so as not to offend anyone; somebody sings, somebody plays, somebody speaks, then they visit a little, play again, laud the general manager's infinite skill and wisdom, and as the final reward introduce a prima donna in the flesh. What a silly, outmoded—and, yes, humiliating—spectacle in a democratic republic! The Metropolitan Opera Guild, run by well-meaning but innocent ladies, does contribute a few thousand dollars to the Opera budget, but in turn the Guild puts out a journal, *Opera News,* which with its Girl Scout dabbling in art destroys the good their monetary contribution may accomplish. When are we going to get rid of all this and who is going to clean the Augean stables?

The double standards of winter and summer concerts are startlingly demonstrated in the performances themselves. The regular symphony concerts are usually polished, even overpolished (we are not speaking now of taste and style, merely of preparation and rehearsals), whereas the Stadium Concerts are just played. An old warhorse of a symphony is not rehearsed at all; concertos and novelties—if novelties are presented at all—receive a short workout, but in general the rehearsal time allotted to a concert barely equals the time needed for the performance. I know a number of fine musicians who would rather listen to the excellently performed band music of the Goldman Band (which evidently lives in a sub-equatorial section of Central Park, for to them this is winter, and they play well) than to a rendition of a Beethoven symphony in which conductor and orchestra are mainly interested in keeping company for the duration of the piece. However, even this is better than nothing, and the generosity of the philanthropic family which supports the Stadium Concerts is rewarded, as are the other celebrated out-of-door musical organizations, by a loyal public which learns to know a small part of the great orchestral literature otherwise not accessible to them.

PAUL HENRY LANG.

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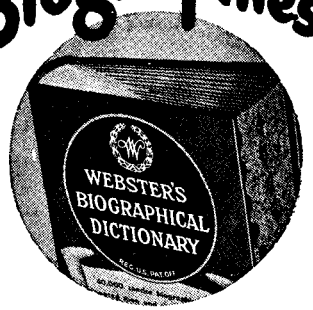

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All the Best People

APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY. By Rosita Forbes. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1946. 303 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by I. D. W. TALMADGE

ROSITA FORBES has written twenty-two books (we've counted them) and nothing we could say about her twenty-third book could possibly discourage her. Nor would we want to. She is indisputably a capable and entertaining writer. She has traveled extensively, visited—she admits—every country in the world except New Zealand (why not New Zealand we don't know), and has recorded readably and faithfully all she saw. She has been praised by Viscount Allenby and Anthony Eden, by "Slim Johnnie" Smuts (him of the Union of South Africa), and by George Bernard Shaw. Said G. B. S. to the author, "I used to think you were a wonderful woman—getting to all these places. But now I've seen you I realize it must have been quite easy for you." Miss Forbes is also extremely photogenic.

All this is to the good. If we have any quarrel with Miss Forbes and her writing, it is purely along class lines. She is just a mite too "upper clawss" to our taste. This upper stratum *Weltanschauung,* like an ill-fitted slip, seems to be showing. Embarrassingly, it reveals itself beneath the fine dress of her objectivity, while we're trying not to look. Of the Duchess of Windsor, Miss Forbes says, "As a Southerner, the Duchess is particularly well adapted to cope with color problems." (We doubt if A. Philip Randolph would agree with that.) The umbrella-wielding Chamberlain, she insists, "was a sincere democrat, an idealist and a Christian." And Unity Mitford—"Poor child, she had dreamed great dreams of young Germany and middle-aged England working hand in hand, and . . . saw her dreams turn to nightmare."

So much for the political coloring of the book. Now as to the book itself. "Appointment with Destiny" is a travelogue through time and space. Temporally, it covers the years 1935 through 1943; geographically, almost half of the globe—India, Soviet Central Asia, Kenya Colony, Union of South Africa, Central Europe, the Bahamas, French North Africa, England, Canada and the United States.

The first third of the volume is strictly travelogue stuff—competent, colorful, informative. The rest deals with the war years, the author's activities, the impact of the war on England (Miss Forbes spent several months in London during the blitz), her lecture tours in Canada and the United States, and a great deal (too much in fact) about her building of a mansion, "Unicorn Cay," in the Bahamas. There is some good, vivid reporting about blitzed London, but again over-class-angled—too much emphasis on poor lady So-and-So, who has been bombed out of her palace at the height of the social season and now has to stand in a queue.

If everyone mentioned in "Appointment with Destiny" buys a copy, the book should have a wide sale. Literally hundreds of members of the smart international set are in it. Many of them, we must admit shamefacedly, we never heard of. But they are all there—the clubwomen of the Bahamas, the Riviera, and Park Avenue. In fact, "Appointment with Destiny" would make a good selection as the Club-of-the-Month Book.

Under the Enemy's Nose

INTO SIAM: Underground Kingdom. By Nicol Smith and Blake Clark. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 1946. 315 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by BRIGADIER GENERAL DONALD ARMSTRONG

WHEN Siam became a shotgun member of the Axis, it became simultaneously a *terra incognita* to the Allies. This was disturbing. A black-out on news of events and tendencies in Thailand would hinder the war against Japan. General Stilwell needed to know how many troops Japan had in that country and where they were. He wanted to learn to what extent this probably reluctant belligerent would participate in the war against us. The Air Forces wanted information about suitable bombing targets. The State Department was curious about Siam's entrance into the war and about resulting political conditions there.

The Office of Strategic Services was elected to find the answers to these important questions. The OSS was lucky enough to enlist the indispensable aid of Siamese students in the United States, organized and directed by Siam's minister and military attaché in Washington. OSS assigned to this duty Nicol Smith, author of "The Burma Road," an officer who was familiar with that part of the world. He was charged with the administration of this group. His reports to Washington are the basis of this book that records the preparation, travels, hardships, and achievements of the expedition. Blake Clark, who stayed at headquarters in Washington, helped to keep the record and to write the book. The story, told chiefly in the form of dialogue, rarely penetrates below the surface of events, but excels as a description of travel in exotic lands and of dangerous adventure in underground operations against the Japanese.

The initial difficulty of entering Thailand took long months of planning and coöperation with the Chinese secret service organization headed by General Tai Li. Eventually, the advance guard of the expedition started on their dangerous and difficult journey in spite of the monsoon season. Two of the young Siamese were seized and shot by the enemy immediately on crossing into Siam. Their radios were discovered, thereby warning the Japanese that agents were seeking to enter the country. But the returning native sons found a strong underground movement headed by the regent, Luang Pradist. Later a number of Americans, including Colonel Smith, landed by plane or submarine while the Japanese forces still occupied and ruled the country. The information collected by the OSS was sent from a radio station located, of all places, in police headquarters in Bangkok.

It would be difficult to invent a more audacious combination of circumstances, but it worked and the Allies profited greatly from the broadcasts from the Bangkok radio station. The espionage and underground operations of the Siamese and the OSS were most helpful to the campaign in southeast Asia. Messrs. Smith and Clark tell the story simply, without exaggeration or heroics. The accomplishments of the Siamese people in the presence of a ruthless enemy and the ingenuity of the OSS personnel in transmitting valuable military intelligence are eloquent proof of the contribution of courage and determination to winning a war even in the machine age.

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM, NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		REMARKS
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
PROKOFIEFF, SONATA IN D (VIOLIN & PIANO) Op. 94. Szigeti, violin; Leonid Hambro, piano. Columbia M 620 (3) $3.75	Balance grossly favors violin; piano is faint. By this time engineers should know instruments in a sonata are equal partners, should be so balanced! Columbia seldom makes this mistake . . . why here?	A	A delightful work, full of P.'s mannerisms (but isn't Beethoven "typically Beethoven"?); related to violin concertos. Simpler, better integrated than recent large orchestral works by Prokofieff. Bad balance obscures excellent playing of Hambro.
MAHLER, SONGS OF A WAYFARER (*Lieder eines Fahrenden gesellen*). Carol Brice, Pittsburgh Symph. Reiner. Columbia X 267 (2) $2.75	Fine balance between orch. and voice. In soft parts singer is "built up" more than seems necessary—sounds as though she she had moved closer to you.	A	(*See below*) Carol Brice is equal to Anderson in vocal quality, and more at home in "classical" music; her younger voice is more flexible. May well be greatest Negro voice.

MAHLER IN BRIEF

COLUMBIA'S release of the Malher "Songs of a Wayfarer" is another long step in making the genius of Mahler understandable for today's audience—so different from whatever audience (if any) Mahler envisioned for his gigantic symphonies. In spite of exceptions to prove the rule, today's musical taste calls for shorter and shorter works, of greater and greater relative concentration, along the lines of earlier music before the great physical expansion of the nineteenth century. Why else, for one reason at least, are the short works of Schubert, Mozart, Chopin increasingly popular? Not a little of this has to do with the requirements of radio and phonograph, but these in turn are no more than part of the increased tempo of the twentieth century—a tempo far too restless to take in Mahler-in-the-large, even in the dubious form of escape.

Mahler had the gift of song almost as did Schubert, and whatever he may have written it is the song element in his music that keeps it alive. Though Mahler specialists may disagree, it is the beauty of the individual thematic ideas in the symphonies that holds our wandering attention, not the over-all monumentality. They are of firmer stuff by far than, for instance, the popular Rachmaninoff themes, which are too short, too concise to be songs, yet too long for real symphonic material.

But where Schubert wrote his songs without a minute's thought, Mahler was obsessed with far larger (and hazier) conceptions of greatness; and to complicate matters he was also a genius, technically, at handling the largest orchestra, which merely fed into his passion for huge music. Into the idea of symphonic monumentality the tiny *lied* could fit only as so much thematic material, incidental to the whole. Yet there are dozens of Mahler melodies which most of us wish could somehow be excised from their gargantuan settings as true *lieder*.

"Songs of a Wayfarer" answer that wish. They are a group of individual short songs with accompaniment for full orchestra—and it is characteristic of Mahler that he dashed them off in preoccupation because he could not find the time to work on his obsession, the symphonies. Each is a true song, a musical unit, with its own highly individual material and mood, yet the rich orchestral accompaniment has the brilliant instrumentation and striking musical content of the symphonies. For our ears these trifles are masterpieces. In their brief brilliance we can easily find the real genius of Mahler—which, no matter how often we may read of it, is, in the endlessly long symphonies, just too much for the jaded ear to grasp. No matter what your previous opinion of Mahler may have been, this small album is guaranteed to please, and notably with the extraordinary voice of Carol Brice and the beautifully recorded Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

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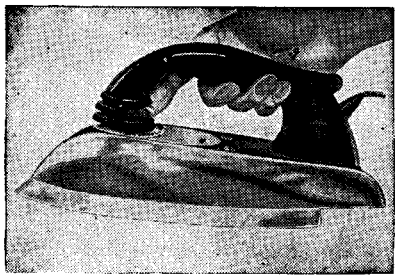

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the Phoenix Nest

I'M GIVING over the *Nest* this week to an unsolicited contribution from an American that happened to turn up in the day's mail.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

America—
Flowing east from the gold coast to the rockbound
Or rolling west from rockbound coast to gold.
As you prefer—local pride determines!
But east, west, north or south, it's still America.

America—
It has a certain quality of sound.
Whitman would have put it this way:
"The word of the sweetest song and all songs,
That strong and delicious word. . . ."

A word, a song, a something in the heart.

"What America means to me!"
Look about you,
Pick up the evening paper there beside your chair;
Open any of a thousand books
Lining the shelves of bookstores and libraries;
Listen to the speech makers,
Messrs. Talk-big and Talk-long, respectively,
Filling the auditoriums with the beautiful sound of their own voices;
They'll tell you, they'll all tell you,
Gladly, vociferously, pontifically,
What America means to them.
Delineation of America is their specialty!

They've put it on a mass production basis—
Watching each other covertly,
Clasping their ready pens, their multiple syllables,
Prepared to demolish their competitors
With a still more just-exactly-right word
Or a phrase more comprehensive!

Yes, it's big business,
Telling your neighbor what America means to you.

I would address another question to Americans.
(By Americans, I mean Americans.
Not Jews or Negroes, Catholics or southern Baptists;
Not Democrats, Republicans, Liberals, or Radicals;
Not rich farmers in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,
Orange growers in California, or dust-bowl refugees from Oklahoma.
I'm not interested in spokes as spokes.
I'm interested in spokes because, taken together,
They make a wheel.
And I'm intensely interested in the wheel
We call
America.)

So I repeat: I would address another question to Americans.

For quite a while I've listened patiently
And for quite a while now you've been telling me
What America means to you.
I was sold on your propositions a long time ago.

There's something else that's bothering me
And that's the question:
"What do YOU mean to America?"

You, there in the Morris chair, what are YOU to America?
What are you doing to establish justice, insure domestic tranquility,
Promote the general welfare, secure the blessings of liberty?

(You don't have to answer, mister, it's a free country.
Put that in your pipe and smoke it, mister,
It's a free country!
You wrote that in a book;
You shouted it in a speech yesterday in Chicago;
You sang it in a song last night in San Francisco;
"America is a place where I can speak my mind
As plainly as I want," you said. "It's a free country!"

So—you're free to talk now or—to keep silent.)

What do you do when the color-mad
Blind a fellow American in Georgia?
(THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE TO BE SECURE IN THEIR OWN PERSONS
AGAINST UNREASONABLE SEARCHES AND SEIZURES
SHALL NOT BE VIOLATED.)
Does the Constitution cover less in Georgia
Or in Michigan or in California?

You read the papers!
What are you doing about Messrs. Talk-big and Talk-long
With their strange and wonderful facility
Of passing out Americana with one hand while the other hand
Screens the ballot box?
(THE RIGHT OF CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES TO VOTE
SHALL NOT BE DENIED OR ABRIDGED BY THE UNITED STATES OR BY ANY STATE
ON ACCOUNT OF RACE, COLOR, OR PREVIOUS CONDITION OF SERVITUDE.)
Does the Constitution cover less in Georgia
Or in Mississippi or in Alabama?

(You don't have to answer, mister, it's a free country.)

What do you say when the war-mongers mutter in your ear:
"We've got to get them before they get us!

"She did live here—then she went to live with her grandmother."

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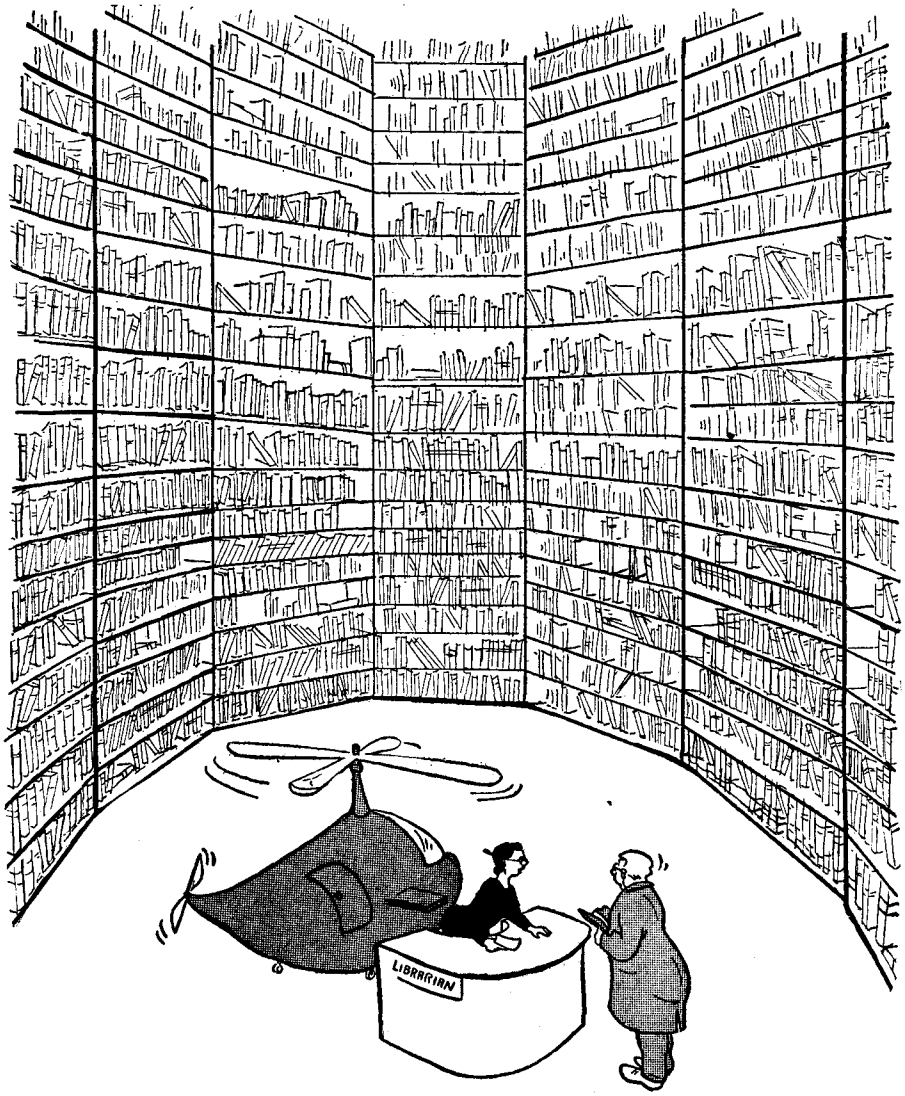

We've got to be ready—anytime now
—it's inevitable!"
What do you say to these Get-Ready
Men with their sly sibilants
And their emphasis on "Watch out!"

I'm not merely curious;
I want to know.
I'm slightly bewildered and
I want to know.

A little while ago Mr. Talk-big said:
"It's one world
But there's room enough for all."
I bought.
Then Mr. Talk-long says: "It's TWO
worlds
And room for only one."
I'm confused.

"The atom bomb if weaponistically
applied
Will leave no world at all!" states Mr.
Talk-big.

"With atom bombs, if we are to sur-
vive,
We must be well and full stocked!"
Thus Mr. Talk-long.
Gentlemen (I speak to Messrs. T.
and T.):
What do you mean to America?
Is ambiguity your contribution to the
New York Harbor goddess?
Is it your heart's desire
To stand "as monuments to that safety
With which error of opinion may be
tolerated
Where reason is left free to combat
it"?
Is that what you mean to America?
I'm bewildered, gentlemen;
I'm emotionally upset, if you wish.
I want to be set straight!

America—
The bright, swift, many-colored wheel!

You, black spoke, white spoke, brown
spoke, yellow spoke!
You, in the house dress, evening dress,
street dress!
In the Pontiac, the Oldsmobile, the
Chrysler, the Ford!
The factory, the field, the city, the
farm!
At the top of the wheel and at the
bottom!

You've told me what America means
to you;
I've listened well, I know that story
backwards!
I'm interested in something bigger
now!
Speak out! I won't miss it—
A voice of one hundred and forty mil-
lion manpower
Will carry a long way.

America means everything to you
But YOU!
What are you doing for America?

NORRINE CHAMBERS.

There is no need to add anything to that. Think it over! It's for you.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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(Continued on page 34)

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(Continued from page 33)

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DOUBLE-CROSTIC NO. 649

By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

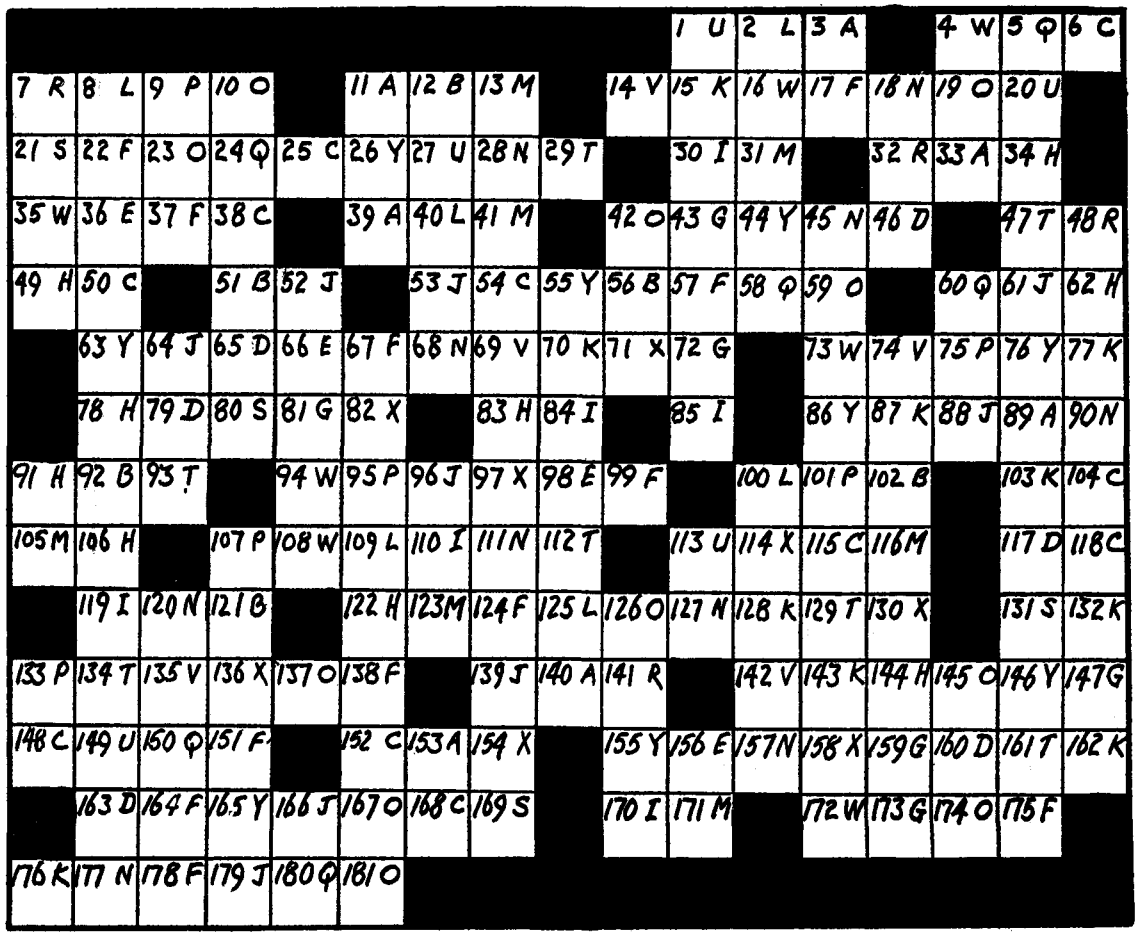
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. One of the chief forms of Arabic and Persian script.	11 33 153 3 89 39 140
B. Those whose duties are mere routine assistance.	12 51 102 121 56 92
C. First comedy by Congreve (with "The"; 1693).	118 25 38 152 148 115 104 50 168 54 6
D. Small, thin "steak" that can be quickly cooked.	163 160 46 79 117 65
E. The name of four Scotch brothers associated with an 18th-cent. style of furniture.	156 98 36 66
F. The Pleiades (2 wds.)	17 67 57 175 37 99 164 178 22 151 124 138
G. American novelist, grandson of Fanny Kemble (1860-1938).	147 173 72 159 81 43
H. Rough line between England and Wales, old entrenchment built by a king of Mercia, 8th cent. (2 wds.)	83 78 122 91 62 49 106 144 34
I. Fibrous skeleton of the fruit of genus *Luffa* used as a sponge.	110 170 30 84 85 119
J. "Isles of the Blessed" of ancient Greeks and Romans (in the Atlantic).	53 88 64 139 96 52 166 61 179
K. A quaver (Music; 2 wds.)	132 176 162 87 103 15 143 70 128 77
L. Corrupt form of English used by a group of Negroes (coastal S. Carolina, etc.)	125 8 2 109 100 40

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. American woman muralist and landscape painter (1887-).	123 116 13 41 171 31 105
N. A collection of principles or rules recognized as authoritative, as Justinian's or Coke's.	120 68 90 127 45 18 157 177 111 28
O. British publisher and politician, real name Harmsworth (1865-1922).	145 126 59 42 10 167 19 23 181 174 137
P. Aphoristic.	9 101 95 133 75 107
Q. Leading Jewish interpreter and teacher of Biblical law (fl. 30 B.C.-9 A.D.)	5 60 150 24 58 180
R. Mountain in Thessaly on which Hercules built his own funeral pyre (Gr. Myth.)	7 141 32 48
S. Milk given by a cow at one milking (U.S.)	131 169 21 80
T. Author of "Rome Haul" (1929).	129 112 47 134 161 93 29
U. Painter of "The Quest of the Holy Grail" in Boston Public Library (1852-1911).	1 113 149 27 20
V. Fruit of any species of *Cucurbita* (Bot.)	14 74 142 135 69
W. American artist and author (1779-1843).	108 35 172 94 4 16 73
X. Overflowing.	136 158 71 97 82 114 130 154
Y. Appellation of the State of Minnesota.	26 146 165 86 155 76 63 44 55

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 6 of this issue.

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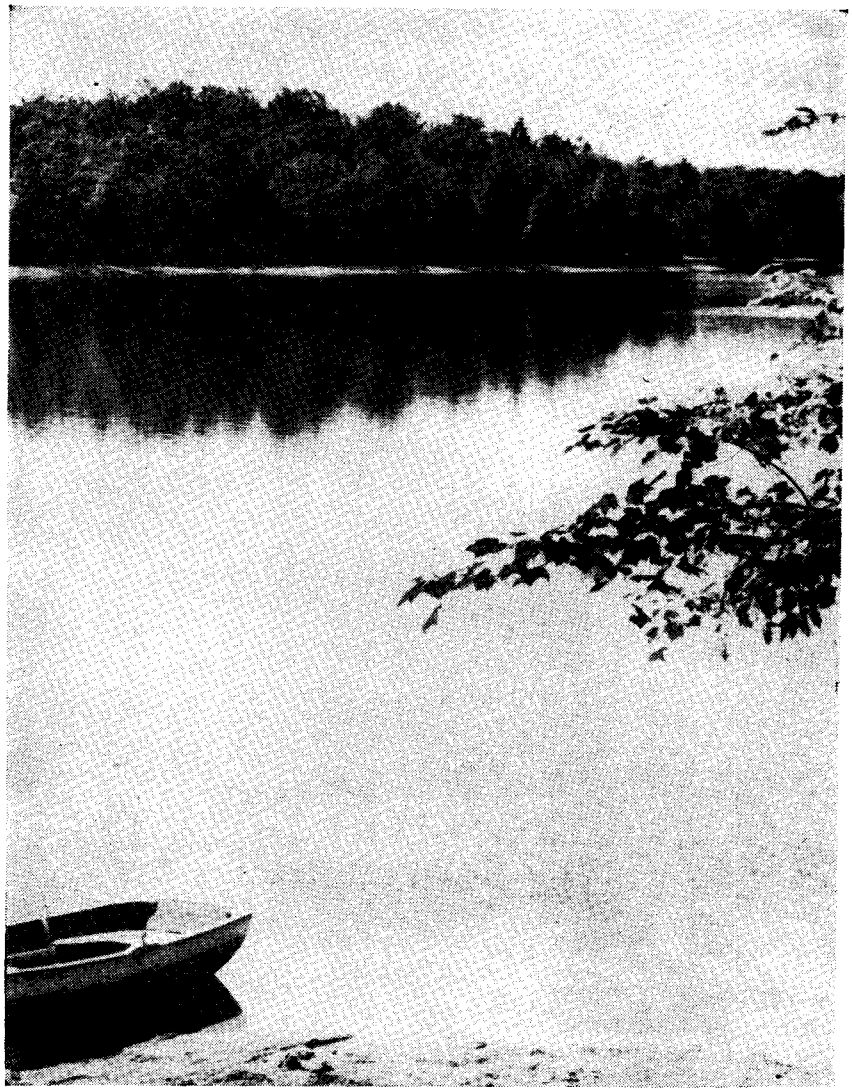

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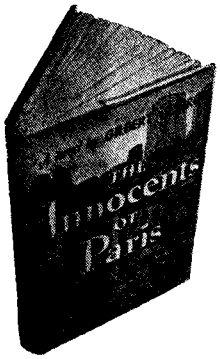

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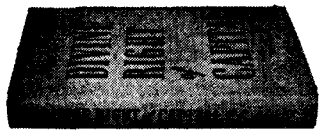

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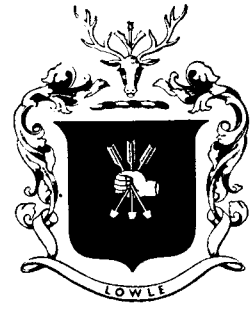

In fact the armchair looks a little overstuffed — perhaps it's the season for a straight-backed chair

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